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The Spirit Christlike
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BY
CHARLES S. MACFARLAND

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CHARLES S. MACFARLAND

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To
My Mother

Preface

THE intention is not, primarily, to influence the mind and command the assent of the reason. These words are less the reasoned conclusions of the mind than the utterances of the heart, though they are both. They are meant to reach the heart and are an appeal to the affections. In so far as they may seek to answer the deep questions of life, they aim to give the simple answer of religion. There is no other final answer to life's deepest questions. They were spoken and written to help in leading men to live in spirits prayerful which will become lives Christlike.

C. S. M.

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The Life Contemplative

Now it came to pass, as they went, that he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house.

And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word.

But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me.

And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things:

But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.—LUKE 10: 38-42.

The Life Contemplative

THE stress of daily life, the meeting of its many needs, obedience to its calls, and the performance of its duties, are so multitudinous and great that living takes the sole form of action, and is in danger of losing in its depth and grace all that it gains in its intensity and movement.

Without the guidance of the mind in judgment, even our philanthropies and other deeds of goodness are meaningless; without consideration of the inner motive of the heart, the performance of our outward duty may become a menace to the true growth of life. The inner self is lost in the environment of outer things and without the growing of the soul the springs of life must ultimately fail. Without the life contemplative the will is weakened, action becomes mere habit, the soul loses its identity, and we become performers on a stage, only to repeat the lines we learn by rote.

The final value of the action of the outer man inheres not in the deed itself, but in the deeper motive of the heart, and the true measure of a life is not the number of its deeds, nor their intensity, even in what outwardly appears the moral realm of living. Actions are not the only things that bless and sanctify our human life.

Some lives among us do no outward deeds of strength, and seem, to superficial souls, to be of little or no worth. But without the mystics of the world, the actors would have had no motive. They are not strong in execution, yet they have breathed forth and made an atmosphere which gives to life its cast and meaning and supplies its impulse. Thus have the musing of the poet, the profound thought of the philosopher, and prayer of saint, wrought for our liberty, equality and charity no less than flaming sword of honor, or the outward deed of love.

Life must be more than the immediate act of impulse. It must have its meaning and interpretation. And if the greater be the cause of things, and the lesser the effect;

if the creator is above the creature, because cause and creator are essential to the acts and the creations, then it is true that inspiration is a greater thing than action, and the dreamer who first dreamed the goodness to be done is of the higher order of our being.

With most of us plain common people, life is not thus determined on the one side or the other by the impelling force of a one-sided genius. But life for us is the epitome of all great lives, in miniature. In smaller measure, each human life is called to meet both needs. Not many of us are set aside for lives either of incessant action or of unruffled meditation.

We must not only do our duty, but we must learn what our duty is. We must not only see the issue of our action as it affects ourselves, and now, but as it influences other men and as it bears on the eternal future. We must not only do, guided by the formal definition of our duty, which contents a thoughtless world whose vision is so dimmed, but we must so do as to satisfy the spiritual sense within.

Did the Son of God come down to earth to show men what to do? Narrowly, he never showed them. Into the small details of daily deed he never went. No rules of conduct did he ever once prescribe.

What Jesus tried to do was this: He taught men how to pray, and how to think, and what the larger laws of the life spiritual were. They were to see God through the windows of pure-heartedness. To say that Jesus is example for mere imitation is to degrade the gospel. He came to give to men a type of mind, a cast of heart, a bent of will. He did not tell men how they were to do, but what they were to be. Walking among men he gave a revelation of the two-fold aspect of a perfect human life. He lived a busy and hardworking life, as we should do. He healed the sick, he helped the poor, he fed the hungry and he taught his followers. But even he could not act out of hand and do his daily duty without contemplation of what his duty was. So his life had another side. He spent the hours of midnight on the mountainside, he went apart to think and pray. He, the Son

of God, with his transcendent goodness, did not feel equal to life's busy cares and deeds, but needed the strength, the guidance and the inspiration of the silent hour. His life passed forth from meditation to action, from action back to meditation.

Too many men and women of to-day have lost this sense of need, and in proportion as life's obligations have increased, the need of preparation is ignored. We need not only to act, but need to think; not only to do but to pray. There are human duties to be met and done. But there are likewise human graces to be gained and cultured. To cultivate the graces we need the life contemplative. If Jesus needed them, do we not need the hours on the mountainside and in the garden?

It is not in the warping stress of life, but in the quiet hour, that the symmetry of life is gained. For here it is, freed from the bias of a definite occasion, that the still small voice of mercy can be heard in tender pleading against the thunder tones of justice. It is here forgiveness gains the victory over sense of outrage and of wrong; that patience

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pleads with righteousness, that charity and love come in to make life beautiful as well as strong.

It is the mind contemplative that puts ourselves before the bar of our own consciences. And whereas, for our brother, mercy tempered justice, and kindness covered up a multitude of sins, now the scene reverses, and the careless, heedless deeds of hurried day assume the form of sins, and we become our own divinely sent confessors.

It is here we analyze the inner motives of our hearts and find, in the clear light of contemplation, that what we made to seem so good, and which was good to the eyes of other men, was really, in the eyes of God, and now in our eyes, selfish, low and mean. We set our secret sins in the light of our own countenance, and having ceased, in this finer light, to judge our brothers, we proceed to judge ourselves.

The inevitable issue of the life and hour contemplative is to make us humble before God and men, and every native hue of arrogance is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of

thought, and we come forth clothed with the wedding-garment of humility.

Again, we gain another view of self, by contrasts. We reflect upon the pages of an open book, upon some great and strong or kind and loving life. In the stress of daily life few of us move among great souls, and it is easy for us then to pray in pharisaic language, and thank God we are not as other men. But we now array another life beside our own. It is in the light of contemplation that our self-complacent satisfaction creeps with shame into the shadows, and we become ourselves.

And now, back from self-judgment, we return to our once-judged brother. We see not only the act he did, but, as we reflect the more, recall his life, with its environment, so much meaner in its moral impulse than our own surrounding. Again we carry back the act and find his path to issue in a well-meant motive.

The grace of patience cannot live without the quiet hour. We behold, in different light from that of noonday, the deeds we did and the things we said, which either

justified our brother's anger, or which magnify the patience which is daily shown to us.

In clear array beside our own untempered life, beside our anger at a wrong, we see the wrong we did and which our brother with a loving heart forgave, beside the wrong done us which we would not remit—our own forgiven debts and unforgiven debtors.

There is another, and I think a deeper aspect of the life contemplative. The life of action gives to us a knowledge of the evil, as we see the wrongs and tragedies of human sin on every hand. But it is either wrong in general terms or wickedness in others than 'ourselves. The life of action seldom begets within ourselves the sense of sin. It is in the silent hour, when the soul, in the inviolable solitude of its own personality, looks, not at the things without, but at the heart within, that we gain the first step to a holy life.

In such an hour we are not alone. One never can be alone with self. We may withdraw from men, but, when we do, there comes the sense of something all about us,

and we hear voices which are not our own. We hear, as we have never heard it in the busy street, the voice of conscience, which is the voice of God.

The idea of the Infinite is hard for the mind, but simple for the heart. To this it is but holiness and purity. And when, in its light, we contrast ourselves we see our moral want. It is the sense of righteousness, and tells us, that, just as we to-day condemned our brother, so we stand condemned. Moral obligation becomes a deep sense and we see it as we did not in the noonday light.

It is not in the heat of our discussion that the truth emerges, but in the quiet hour of thought. Here we see evil in all its guilt and goodness in all its beauty, and only here.

But we have not alone the view that humbles us. We have still another and a better view. It is this silent hour that gives us, not alone the sense of what we are, but better visions of what we may become, disclosures of our true and better self.

Its lights pass over from humiliation and

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contrition to prophecy and aspiration. And we may go down from the mountain, with Moses and with Christ, our faces shining, because we have seen God and goodness.

Thus do our views of life become correct and we shall come to judge ourselves and others with both righteousness and love.

The things of our material life, its losses and its gains, recede into their proper background. Without the putting off of our humility we may rise to the sense of our own worth in the universe of God. The estimate of men is set at naught. If in the daytime we have been misjudged and wronged, we shall forgive our judges and be glad of a good conscience before ourselves and God. If we have failed to enter or to win the race for earthly things, we may rejoice in treasures of the mind and heart.

These are the issues of the life and hour contemplative. In it we get our viewpoint from above and we see things and life with the very eye of God. With this hour as the beginning for the deeds of life, we make our approach from within. It is the regulation, controlling and determination of the out-

ward by the inward life, and the ship is no longer cast about by the waves of the ocean, but rides upon them. It is this hour that guides life in its movement toward its spiritual ends.

The life contemplative is deep and strong, does its work under a divine impulse and guidance, bears its sorrows with a brave heart, and irradiates its common daily tasks with the sunlight of a spiritual meaning.

“ Turn then away from life’s pageants,—turn,
If its deep story thy heart would learn !
Ever too bright is that outward show,
Dazzling the eyes till they see not woe.
But lift the proud mantle which hides from thy view
The things thou shouldst gaze on, the sad and the
true ;
Nor fear to survey what its folds conceal
So must thy spirit be taught to feel.”

We need to do the work of Jesus in the world, but we need first to sit at Jesus’ feet.

The Light Within

If . . . the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!—*Matt. 6: 23.*

The Light Within

WE live a twofold and contrasting life. Man is a creature physical, born of the dust; a being spiritual, breathing the spirit of the Infinite, whose child he is. There is another life than that upon the street and in the market-place, other realities than those of outward sense, another self than that which buys and sells and eats and drinks. We all are living souls, born of the Eternal Spirit. We live to-day, in time, but we are living an eternal life. And it is guided, nurtured and illumined, not by the noon-day glare of outward earthly things, but by an inner light.

We are better than the oxen and the sheep, not by an endowment of the outer clay, but by inbreathing of a Holy Spirit. Man is a child of earth and man. But he is more, a child of heaven and of God. His life is lived amid surroundings of material things, but is a heaven-imparted gift. He

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has relations with the universe and God. He has a spirit endless in its being, that knows of neither space nor time, and he is an immortal soul.

It often sadly happens, in the busy cares of his material existence, its weary hours of daily toil, the meeting of its earthly wants,—that the larger and the deeper life fades from his view and he surrenders the diviner gift of his eternal spirit. And in the well-intended energy and perseverance of his human and material ends, the spiritual meaning of his personality is dimmed and his truer life extinguished. He who is born into our present age and place will find the trend of life away from these diviner things, and if he enters on the sweeping current of his generation, will move away from his true self, the inner spirit will be lost, because the inner light will fail.

The world to-day is deaf to heavenly sounds. The voice of faith is being silenced. The eyes are blind to spiritual truth. The voices of the earth are loud. The air is full of its attractive, blinding light. Men and women are evading the eternal issues, and

ignoring the true ends of life for meaner themes and baser interests, and the supremest questions of their minds are not of things invisible. They do not seek and hoard immortal gifts. For prayer there is no time, nor is there impulse. For earnest, serious thought no hour of the day is left. The riches of the earth are gained, and substituted for the treasures of the mind and heart. Eternity is lost in time, and we are in danger lest we pass beyond the vale no better than we came. Yes, God has made man of the earthen dust. And God breathed upon him and he became a living spirit. The spirit is extinguished in the interest of the dust and the divine image and the heavenly superscription are perverted and effaced.

Let us be willing to reflect with serious mind and meditative heart on the illumination and the guidance and the exaltation of our human spirits by the thought of God. Let us be minded to acknowledge the gentle promptings of our spiritual sense, to use the observation of the soul that we may see the meaning of the universal order, and let us

ask our inmost hearts if it be that the inner light has grown or failed.

The most of us do not commit great sins nor violate the sentiment of men about us by flagrant acts of vice. But do we not forget, once and again, that culture is the everlasting law of growth? that every grace of heaven with which we are endowed is weakened by disuse? and if the culture of the soul be a lost art, its light will fade and be dissolved into the light of common day?

If it be true that childhood's faith in God and the eternal things is lost, or lessened, is it not because the spiritual sense is dulled and that the inner light, which once extinguished ne'er may be rekindled—that the inner light has become darkness? If the impulse to our prayers is gone, if things no longer are appareled in celestial light, and shades of prison house have closed upon the eye of faith, it is not that the futile fancies of an earlier, foolish hour have been chased away by wisdom's dawn, but it is because the inner light has failed—the light within us darkness has become.

In us it is not altogether gone. And while it is the mission of the prophet to forewarn you of the failing light, it is the better task to tell you how the inner light may grow from day to day, from year to year, until it one day fades away, lost in the opening vistas of a better light beyond; to tell you that the noisy street of daily life may not drown out the still small voice of God, and that while other men, weary, jaded and disgusted with their own false ecstasies, vainly seeking their new pleasures for the disenchanted joys of yesterday are overwrought, incapable of higher things—that we may cultivate and gain a better life, which shall uplift our joys, enshrine our sorrows, deepen our best experiences, and that we may shed forth a light to show to other men whose lives have strayed and been misspent, the higher and the better way.

How shall we recover the lost inner light and how shall it be deepened in our souls? The means and way are very plain and simple. They are the same for small and great, for rich and poor, for simple and for wise,

for the great minds of genius and for us, plain, common people. It must have, first, the art of which we thought together once before, the quiet, silent time, the life and hour contemplative.

It will not do us harm if we shall think of this again. We should not get too far away from earthly life, nor be in danger of too great an other-worldliness, if we should think of nothing else for many days and nights.

The vision of the Holy City did not come to the inspired disciple in its clearest and sublimest colors while he mended broken nets or caught his fish beside the busy sea-shore, but on his solitary Patmos saw he that new heaven and new earth. It was not on the busy road, but when alone with self and God, that he saw the tears of human sorrow wiped from human faces by the tender hand of God, that he beheld the day when death should be no more, nor sorrow, neither crying, nor the sting of pain, discerned the nightless day and the candle light grow dim and sun go out beside the better and the heavenly light. It is when,

call it unpractical language if you will, it is when earth's images are dimmed, that the sight of the eternal city will grow bright.

Just as, in hours contemplative, our views of human life are gained in their correct perspective, and we proceed to rightly judge our brothers and ourselves, so in these hours we see not only how the things of earth should be, but what the things of heaven are. And as we lead ourselves from judgment to self-condemnation, on to repentance for the sin we clearly see, in the same light we are transfigured and become our real and higher selves, as thus the light within us grows.

The way is simple. We need to set apart our hours and days, our evenings and our Sabbaths, for the growing of the inner light. The poor and hard-worked man, toiling in the noisy mill, the busy man of commerce and of trade, immersed for six long days in merchandise and figures, the hard-working housewife with her deeply laden cares—these and all others, need these hours and days, that we may not forget that human life is not bound up in iron

wheels and whirling belts, by offices and counters, nor by kitchen walls; that we may not forget that we are more than beasts of burden; that we may feel the freedom of our spirits, may see the inner light, and feel its glow. Discouraged by our earthly failures, depressed by our discouragements, we need the shining of the inner light to pierce the outer darkness.

It grows by recognition, by taking time to think of it. It grows by seeking to get down below the surface of our common life, by love of truth, of the unseen realities beneath things seen. But, though the inner light must thus have periods of renewal and of deepening, it need not go out between them. Thus nurtured, in its light the common things of life may be transfigured, and they will shed again reflected light to make it brighter. It grows by using it to light with.

I know we cannot always leave our tasks and occupations that we may cultivate our spiritual life. And we need not. The inner light must not be closed, like the dark-

lantern, in the busy hour of day. If here it shines it will irradiate our common tasks and they will be no longer common. And we shall find that toil, and even disappointment, may be used to serve the interests of the inner life and light.

It grows in our experiences of sorrow and of sadness if we see them right. It may be that a life of love and a loved life goes out from ours. We follow it beyond, by its own light, and it will lead us to a place of holiness and beauty in whose atmosphere the outer lights of life are dimmed and only there the inner light is seen.

It grows, again, by impartation. The light it sheds becomes its own again. And it may be translated into terms of earthly service. We may transmute it into sympathy, it shines in charity, in daily goodness and in love. It grows by being used in form of deeds to men which are true sacrifices to a worshiped God and which, done in the name of Christ, are done for him. It is gained by most of us by impartation. It is reflected and reflecting light. To gain in deeper measure, go stand within the shadow

of some great soul whose shadow is the light. Get into contact with great minds and hearts. It grows thus by receiving. Go now, impart it to another. The more it is shed the more it grows.

It comes by wanting it, and never unentreated. It gains by what the saints have called by the almost forgotten name of prayer. It is the opening of the mind to truth, the opening of the heart to love. The inner light will fail and flicker and will ultimately die, if we forget to pray that it should stay.

A blind man feels his hesitating, trackless way across the busy street. It is a sad, pathetic sight—the faltering step of him who goes about this world of beauty and who cannot see its many glories; to whom the orb of heaven is but a glimmer or perhaps the densest darkness; to whom trees are never green, the summer sky not blue; for whom there is no autumn sunset in its fading glow; whose darkened eye can never see the human face he loves; to whom no eye speaks its affection and who sees no look of human sympathy and beholds no smile of

joy ; to whom this world with all its beauty is but one great, dark, unfathomable and unglimmered night. Let us be reverently grateful that we are not blind.

But may we not be ? All about us, here and now, are sights and visions of eternal truths and beauties which we have not seen. The scenes beheld by sense and these experiences of our nature are at best but the suggestions of realities of spirit. The hand that touches ours, the tender kiss of love, the bending of the loving mother over the cradled child—all these are but sad mockeries if they be nothing more than instincts natural and human. We must invest them with a spiritual meaning. For if they be but things of one short day, and all are one day to be blotted out, life is but mocking us and prophecy is but a lie. Unless it be that these things have beginning and their end in heaven, they are but flashes of a momentary light which makes the blackness only darker.

It is by looking thus at life, investing it with all its holy meaning, that we shall think and live, by guidance of the inner

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light which comes by earnest wanting, which grows by shining and by use, until it shall be one day lost in the better light beyond to which it surely leads.

The Growth in Grace

Of his fulness we all received, and grace for
grace.—*John 1 : 16.*

The Growth in Grace

THE stronger and interpreting expression of the Greek original of the text is, "grace instead of grace," grace in place of grace, grace upon grace. The old is superseded by the new; or, better still, the new is added to the old; or, better still than that, the new fulfils, completes the old. The good is replaced by the better. Or, as another writer of the Holy Scriptures has expressed the method of the Infinite, "He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second." The true and vital experience in Christ is this unceasing, constant paradox. God ever satisfies the present and yet gives to us desires for a future more and better. Out of his fulness he fulfils our wants, and yet, with the fulfilment, comes the better, deeper want. We evermore pursue a beckoning and a flying goal. God never leaves us where we are, but ever would impel and draw us onward, giving now of grace, but

with the giving and receiving, showing the ideal beyond. "I go," said Jesus, "to prepare a place for you." "But I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." Thus the acquiring of his fulness is a perpetual substitution of the better for the good, and for the better, the better still; of grace for grace.

Religious life may be conceived in many ways, and all of them are true, though partial. It may be thought of as a single deed, done once for all. We yield ourselves to God, give him our wills, confess our sins, receive forgiveness, and we thus become religious. Our experience with Christ is thus a definite and momentary act, confined to a precisely bounded time.

This inward action of the heart takes on its outward forms and our religious life becomes observance through our outward, hallowed and time-honored ceremonies. We worship God, we praise his goodness, and we offer up our prayers with bowed heads and bended knees. We sit in fellowship together at the sacred table to the memory of

his holy Son. We sanctify with forms and with observances, and call it, and we call it rightly, if it be rightly done, religion.

Again we look at the religious life as an adherence to the truth, we worship God with mind as well as heart. And thus to be religious is, with consecrated reason, to believe in God's eternal verities.

Far better, we are wont to think, it is a way of living. It is the faithful doing of our duties, the feeding of the hungry and the helping of the poor. We comfort those who sorrow and we weep with those that mourn. Religion pure and undefiled is this, to visit the fatherless and the widows in affliction, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world. It is the meeting of our human obligations. It is a strong and careful moral life.

More than all these, and only these because of this, it is a true and loving spirit. We realize that outward works, whether they be of worship to God or of charity to men, rendered to the Father by a direct access, or rendered to him through his children, have no value for us, if considered only in themselves, as outward acts. The inner

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motive of the heart determines. The deed and observation must be prompted and incited by the spirit that is right. And so, at last, religion has become an ultimate condition of the heart.

All these conceptions are both good and true. Religion is at first confession. It is restoration. Nor can it live without its outward forms expressing inward feelings. It is a creed, allegiance to and love of God's eternal truth. It is made up of deeds of charity and goodness in the needy world. It is a state of mind and heart, and cannot be without these things in symmetry and harmony together.

But I would have you see another view and behold religion as a constant prophecy of things that are to be. For best of all, it is a life that grows. Anticipation is its law. Hope is its joy. It has a future. The only joy of life, to a true soul is in the consciousness that he is going on.

We give ourselves to God in one supreme, determined act, but do not live a true religious life unless, from day to day, the meaning of the act is deepened in our souls.

Confession must become more humble, genuine and real. The consciousness of sonship to the Father must be deeper. Beginnings must be thought of as beginnings, and not as ends once and forever gained.

Observances must gain in sacramental meaning. Our prayer to-day should bring us nearer God than yesterday's, our worship should be more in spirit and in truth, our hearts more grateful for the gifts of God, and these more unforgotten, the holy place where we are wont to worship and to pray more sacred and more loved and sought. These things should gain in sacred meaning as we older grow.

The truth of God and Christ is not attained except by growth. The ages witness to the method of God's revelation. From patriarch to prophet and from prophet to apostle, of his fulness they received, grace for grace, from age to age. The deep and earnest thinker of the present time sees more of truth than they, if he will stand on their strong shoulders, and will look for it. So every heart should be unfolding, every mind enlarging, before new and better views

of truth. The individual experience is an epitome of that of ages. God's is a growing revelation of the truth to every growing human mind.

The deeds of life ought to be getting better. Yesterday's good act should be replaced by better acts to-day, the victory of patience surer, compassion find its added object and its deeper sense, the sins which do so easily beset us, less easily besetting, our lives more thoughtful and more righteous.

And now, just as we saw the heart within to give the moral value to the act without, so must our lives develop by the ever growing transformation of the heart. To-morrow's deed may be the repetition of to-day's and yet be better, be it prompted by the purer motive, the act of love more loving, the word of consolation uttered with a softer voice, the act of probity and honesty less in observance of propriety to meet the eyes of men, more of the natural and ready utterance of a good and honest heart. Thus the confession of the lips, the reverential act of homage, the prayer of aspiration, the acceptance of the truth, the deed of goodness

may remain the same to outward seeing and may yet be infinitely better, be it sanctified by a purer, better life within. Life's true experience is receiving of God's fulness, but it is a constant transformation, of a grace in place of grace, of good to better, and of height to higher.

This is the aim of a religious life, not to get through somehow without a wreck of what we are; not holding to the good things that we have; but a life that cherishes the good because it prophesies the good to be. To see the distant scene we need not ask, but we must ever see the step above that's next.

This does not mean that any of us, in weakness as we are, shall never lose our momentary ground. Sufficient it may be if we are sure our forward steps are oftenest and longest.

Grace for grace. The universe reveals God's method. The ages of the cosmos give us record of his constant hand. The mind of man is thus expanded and unfolded, and the primer of to-day leads on to deeper knowledge for to-morrow.

The laws of the eternal are a unity

throughout the universe. Just as the mortal body grows, and as the mind enlarges, so is it with the human spirit; our religious life is the unceasing growing of our immortal soul. It is not some things superadded from without; it is a life within. It is fulfilment. It is the realizing of humanity ideally in the Creator's image. We are children of God. We may deny our kinship; we may repress it; we may let it die. True life is in its nurture. The love in us, not in degree, but in its kind, is the same love that is in Christ and God. Religion is the culture of the element in us which is divine. Just as we grow from childhood's ignorance to manhood's knowledge, and from infant weakness to maturer strength, so must we rise, by the unceasing culture of our souls, toward our diviner height.

This was the revelation of the incarnation. Is Jesus the Saviour of men or the leader of men? This is the answer: he saves by leading. This ineffable revealment was of a humanity in its ideal and true relation to God. The Son of man is the ideal for the sons of men, and step by step we must draw

nearer him ; to Jordan and experience the higher self within us and the call that comes to it from heaven ; into the wilderness and crush temptations ; with him on the mountainside, and in the light of his transfiguration be transfigured ; go with him to the cross and rise with him by sacrifice.

This leads us into life eternal. It is eternal life. Thus do we become what we are. We were the children of God. We are God's children ; but we are yet to be so, more deeply and more truly. In his divine and human life Jesus reveals himself as the interpreter and pledge of the divine within the human, perfected in his holy self, unrealized and prophetic in us all. "I go—ahead—to prepare a place for you." "I come again, to receive you to myself"—ever leading, ever returning, ever drawing to himself. He outgoes us with his goodness, he returns to us with his love. We stop to sin, and he goes on and leaves us. He comes again ; we see our wrong in his pure light and let him lead us on away from it. Religion is the incarnation growingly realized in men.

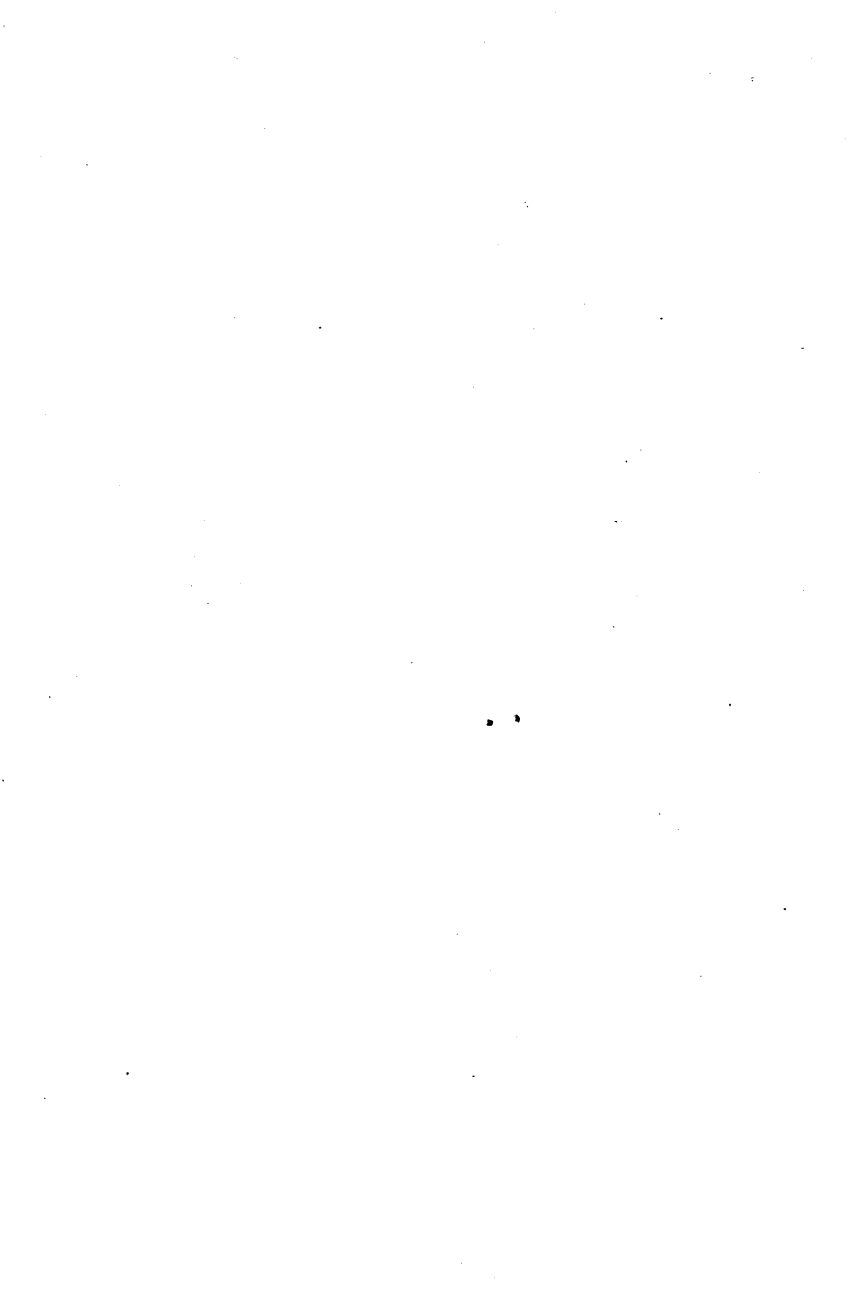
Grace for grace. Ever satisfying by unsatisfaction ; to-day's end but to-morrow's starting-point ; receiving the divine fulness, and by it growing empty ; pursuing an ever-receding goal. It is only saying that the more we have the more we want to have ; that as we realize its unattainableness, we also may be sure we are attaining.

Is life unfolding from within, or is it an infolding from without ? There is no argument betwixt the two. It is both. Like only can respond to like. It is God beckoning to man, and it is the divine in man reaching out to God.

It is not always so. It may be we were more religious in our childhood days than now ; but it ought not to be. The graces may be made to flee before advancing years, but age should mantle and adorn the brow with deepening goodness.

Religion, thus, has a beginning, but is not an act in time. It finds expression for itself, but is not an expression. It is contemplation of the truth by mind, but not a proposition of the intellect. It is a doing of deeds, but consists not in the number of

them. It inheres in a spirit of love, but is not changeless. It is all these unfolding, deepening, growing with the years. It is development of an initial act. It is the deepening reverence of observance. It is the seeing more and more of truth and yielding more and more completely to it. It is the living of a good, but also of a better life; the doing of life's deeds with deeper, finer motives; the culture of the soul; the receiving of his fulness, grace for grace; the rich grace for the richer; the life divine within us growing, and the good becoming better.



God With Us
(*A Christmas Meditation*)

And they shall call his name Emmanuel, which
. . . . is, God with us.—*Matt. 1 : 23.*

God With Us

“AND they shall call his name Emmanuel, which is, God with us.” Thus spake the holy prophet who long foresaw the coming of a deeper and diviner meaning into human life. The race moved on. The darkness of its ignorance and sin was growingly dispelled by the light shed from its holy seers, its righteous prophets, its singers of heavenly anthems, its good and holy men. The coming light is ever foreseen by the purer of heart, and all history is the fulfilment of their prophecy. Goodness ever hopes for itself and sees the future with the eye of faith. Thus men, born out of due time, lived in the darkness of their age, saw through its mists and shadows, and beheld the light beyond, of which the glow within their souls was but the harbinger and prophecy.

One after the other, the Father of all

human children sent his messengers of heaven to prepare the way. Stoned and rejected by the many, they each had gathered men whose eyes, looking from the windows of pure souls, beheld the shining light and the wicket gate to which they pointed. They left their marks upon the race, and their disciples took the light which they passed on, and each succeeding generation made it brighter till the Day-star should appear. This is the meaning of the older Holy Scriptures.

Humanity has never been left alone without the God whose child it is. Its theophanies have been in human forms, and theophanies in human lives did not begin or end at Bethlehem. His Spirit has ever clothed itself with human personalities who have uttered his loving message or warned of the impending fate of sin. Thus the way of the Lord had been prepared. Straight through life's desert they made a highway for our God. The glory of the Lord was growingly revealed.

But by and by the prophets were all dead, and God had seemed to cease to speak.

The race was left a little time in darkness that it might realize itself. But the Father had not forgotten his erring children. Again, first to the holy few who looked for the redemption of Israel, came foregleams of the coming day. Men had made human life a wilderness, from whence again the voice of heaven spake through human lips. The kingdom of heaven was at hand. Thus far and now the voice had uttered the proclamation of heaven, but in the terms and language of an earthly mind. In judgment should the kingdom be fulfilled. Its Holy One should come. Thus far they spake aright. But He should come with sword of vengeance and a flaming fire.

At last, in the fulness of time, from the Father, who had been leading his children on although they wist it not, or knew him not as Father, the full light from heaven came.

And again, O child of God, remember, again it streamed from a human face and God's voice spake from the human lips of another child of God. It was God come, not only to live in a man, but come to live

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with men. The sacred meaning of it is, he came to live in you and me and all our brothers and sisters in the world. This we shall see, and how, a little farther on.

He came, not to destroy humanity, but to fulfil it. He came, not to take men's lives because they sinned, but to give them new lives that they should sin no more; not to dash out their hopes, but to ignite them; not simply to rebuke them for what they had not been, but to show them what they ought to be. He came to tell every meanest, humblest and obscurest man that his ideal self was in the image of God, and that He was come to restore the likeness.

In the fulness of his goodness and his glory God was to come among men. It was by a very simple way. Mark the method. He found, first, a good and pure and holy woman. One by one he was to take every relation of human life and invest it with a divine meaning, and he began with motherhood.

“And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee.”

Page upon page of learned disquisition have been written to interpret this, and most of them have never touched its deeper meaning. It is a strangely unpoetic and materialistic mind that lowers the sublime and beautiful idea of this transcendently told story by making it the subject of a cold and hard analysis. Is the story true? To ask the question is to show that we have missed its deepest meaning.

“And the angel answered and said unto her,
The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the
power of the Highest shall overshadow thee :
Therefore also that holy being which shall be
born of thee shall be called the Son of God.”

The first mark of the incarnation was the stamping of motherhood with its divineness. There is no holier Christmas lesson. For over every mother, if she will but look and listen, is the angel. Upon her is the shadow of the Holy Spirit, and

“Heaven lies about us in our infancy !”

“The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star,
Hath had elsewhere its setting,
And cometh from afar :

Not in entire forgetfulness,
And not in utter nakedness,
But trailing clouds of glory do we come
From God, who is our home."

"And she brought forth her firstborn son,
and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid
him in a manger ; because there was no room
for them in the inn."

There was no room. An infant prophecy of the life that was to be. He never did find room. He never has found room. Look for him now and you will find him in the manger of the houses of men. He finds your heart and mine so crowded that he often has to wait outside. *They* did not know he was from God. We do. "And they shall call his name Emmanuel, which . . . is, God with us." God with us in patience, in forbearance, long-suffering, long waiting, and in love.

The inn was filled with busy and important men—men whose minds were filled with earthly cares, their lives with earthly pleasures, and their barns with earthly plenty; men of the world, we call them. They did not see him and they did not learn that he was there.

But some men found it out.

“There were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.”

The breadth and openness of the world we live in is what gives us open hearts. The angelic host was not chanting in one place. It was everywhere. It was the same sky over both field and inn. God does not speak more to some men than to their brethren, but to all alike. It is the difference in their hearing. They put things between themselves and heaven. The men and women in the inn did not hear. We might all get nearer heaven and might better hear its voices, did we get nearer nature's heart, and let the heavens declare God's glory.

“And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them. . . . And the angel said unto them, Fear not : for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. . . . And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.”

That host will be there to-night. 'Tis there this morning. 'Tis always there. And you and I can hear it if we will.

But we have here another infant prophecy. Shepherds were very humble people. They were the common workmen of their day, such men as those who run our cars and drive our wagons and build our houses now, neither great nor wise, as greatness and wisdom go in this world. A little later on a few plain, humble fishermen gave us this morning's message.

First of all, the Christmas lesson of humility. But deeper is *this* lesson. The lowly, plain and humble men and things of human life are sanctified.

"They shall call his name Emmanuel, which is, God with us." God with us, with the poorest and obscurest of us, hallowing with a divine glory the humble life of humble men, if they will but listen for the song and look for the angel.

I love this lesson, telling us that God will speak to men, and live with men, and care for men, and honor men whose hands are hardened and whose faces blackened with

the dust of mines, whose cheeks are browned with the cold winter winds that blow upon the street-car, whose backs are weary carrying our heavy burdens, whose habiliments are rough, whose steps are heavy, whose speech is poor, whose ways uncouth. It tells us more: it tells us we should care for them, and never should despise them. They are God's children.

And yet men need not be shepherds that they may see and follow the star of faith. There is a wisdom and a culture of men that is foolishness with God. There is, as well, a true and humble human wisdom. While these shepherds were listening,

“Behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him. . . . And, lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was. . . . And when they were come into the house, they . . . fell down, and worshipped him: and . . . presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.”

The rich gifts of intellect and mind are not despised by God.

“And they shall call his name Emmanuel—God with us.” God with us, whether simple or wise, whether in the cloistered study or the open fields. And if the unlearned, poor and humble be yet rich in the divine endowments of the conscience and the soul, he is nearer heaven and a truer child of God.

“And they shall call his name Emmanuel, which is, God with us.” A human life filled with the divine. A human life revealing a divine holiness of living. A human life sanctifying our human relations with a divine meaning. A human life telling us that we are children of God. A human life which says to us that we are not the creatures of the dust with transient lives which one day shall be blotted out. A human life which fixed our loves, our friendships and our highest joys in an eternal setting. A human life which tells us that our birth-place was in heaven and invests the opening vistas of our untrodden future with a sweet attractiveness and a divine glory, telling us of the divine meaning of everything that's human; showing us that the

humblest and meanest of our conditions are full of the loftiest and most heavenly possibilities, translating our daily earthly life into the speech of heaven.

Over the mean manger in which the Holy Child was cradled shone the wise men's star. Over the fields of the shepherd working-men hovered the angels of the heavenly choir. This is the revelation of the divine that stands over, and everywhere surrounds, our human lives, revealing their sacred meaning and waiting to assume their common forms, clothing motherhood and childhood with a heavenly garment, investing the labor of human hands with beauty, consecrating wisdom to a search for sacred truth.

There never was a story like this. There never has been such a story since. Its truth is sealed to some. It is so sealed to every man who does not invest womanhood and motherhood and childhood with holy meanings; sealed to every man who does not see in wife and mother something for a reverent and deeply sacred love; sealed to every mother upon whom, in motherhood, the

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Holy Spirit has not cast its overshadowing presence; sealed to all whose eyes and ears are not open to divine scenes and voices; closed to every human life that does not see and feel the beauty of sacrifice and service.

To those who do, this Christmas story is a disclosure of what human life ought to be. It tells them what God thinks of his children and what they ought to think of one another and themselves. It tells us that men are children of God. It reveals ideal humanity. The life of Jesus tells us what we ought to be and shows us what we ought to do; that we should be brave and kind and loving and patient and true. It tells us that we should be good, like God.

In Jesus we see the revelation of the capacity of our human souls to receive God. It is our true and realized humanity revealed to our untrue, unrealized selves. In him, God became partaker of the life of men, that men might be partakers in the life of God.

Let this vision once be seen and cherished, let this story thus be heard with its interpre-

tation, and Wordsworth's trend of human life must be reversed,—

The "Shades of the prison-house [*will not*] begin to close
 Upon the growing Boy,
But He beholds the light, and whence it flows,
 He sees it in his joy ;
The Youth, who daily [*nearer towards*] the [*light*]
[*Shall*] travel, still is Nature's Priest,
 And by the vision splendid
 Is on his way attended ;
The Man [*shall never see*] it die away,
[*Nor*] fade into the light of common day."

Felicia Hemans has more truly sung and prayed,—

"O lovely voices of the sky,
 That hymned the Saviour's birth !
Are ye not singing still on high,
 Ye that sang, ' Peace on Earth ' ?
To us yet speak the strains
 Wherewith, in days gone by,
Ye blessed the Syrian swains,
 O voices of the sky !

"O clear and shining light ! whose beams
 That hour heaven's glory shed
Around the palms, and o'er the streams,
 And on the shepherd's head :
Be near, through life and death,
 As in that holiest night
Of Hope, and Joy, and Faith,
 O clear and shining light !

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"O Star ! which led to him whose love
Brought down man's ransom free;
Where art thou ? Midst the hosts above
May we still gaze on thee ?
In heaven thou art not set,
Thy rays earth might not dim,
Send them to guide us yet,
O Star which led to him !"

If we shall see to-day the inner meaning
of the advent, we shall, with George Eliot,
pray and aspire,—

" May I reach
That purest heaven, be to other souls
The cup of strength in some great agony,
Enkindle generous ardor, feed pure love,
Beget the smiles that have no cruelty —
Be the sweet presence of a good diffused,
And in diffusion ever more intense.
So shall I join the choir invisible
Whose music is the gladness of the world."

The incarnation was in man that it might
be in men.

O child of God, as God lived in his Son,
so would he live in his sons and children.

"Speak to him thou, for he hears, and spirit with Spirit
can meet —
Closer is he than breathing, and nearer than hands and
feet."

God Within Us

For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified.

That they all may be one ; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us.
—*John 17 : 19, 21.*

God Within Us

ALL in the finite that is good and true is but the clothing, in an earthly dress, of infinite and unseen things. Thus do the heavens declare the Father's glory, the sunlight is the shining of his countenance, the music of the spheres the utterance of holy love. God is not far away. The loving Ruler of the whole creation is ever in its midst, and speaks, on every hand, to hearts that wait and listen, and reveals himself to eyes that seek to see him in the things about us.

The science of the Infinite is not best read in books. It is written on the heart and on the pages of our human life.

Our saintly Quaker poet has expressed the fundamental truth of our religious faith in terms of simple human lore :

" I fain would see
How Three are One and One is Three."

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He wanders forth in sun and air, and as
he meditates, he feels

“ A presence melted through his mood,
A warmth, a light, a sense of good,
Like sunshine through a winter wood.”

He walks among the streets of busy men,
and that same Spirit vests itself in garments
of our human life.

“ He saw that presence, mailed complete
In her white innocence, pause to greet
A fallen sister of the street.

“ Upon her bosom snowy pure
The lost one clung, as if secure
From inward guilt or outward lure.

“ But still he prayed, ‘ Lord, let me see
How Three are One and One is Three ? ’

“ Then something whispered, ‘ Dost thou pray
For what thou hast ? This very day
The Holy Three have crossed thy way.

“ ‘ Did not the gifts of sun and air
To good and ill alike declare
The all-compassionate Father’s care ?

“ ‘ In the white soul that stooped to raise
The lost one from her evil ways,
Thou saw’st the Christ, whom angels praise !

- “ ‘ A bodiless Divinity,
The still, small Voice that spake to thee
Was the Holy Spirit's mystery !
- “ ‘ Revealed in love and sacrifice,
The Holiest passed before thine eyes,
One and the same, in threefold guise.
- “ ‘ The equal Father in rain and sun,
His Christ in the good to evil done,
His voice in thy soul ;—and the Three are One ! ’
- “ And his heart answered, ‘ Lord, I see
How Three are One, and One is Three ! ’ ”

One meaning of the poet's dream is this: the Father has revealed himself, not only in the morning stars that sing for joy, not only on the page of written Book, but in the hearts and lives of human children, in the beauty and the sacrifice of human personalities.

Cur Deus homo? is an ancient and a deeply argued question. Council upon council have discussed and reasoned on it. And yet I think it has a very simple answer for the heart and life. What is the meaning of the incarnation? They called his name Emmanuel, which is, God with us, the revelation of the Father. Men gazed at Jesus'

face and he was transfigured before them ; he shone as the sun, his garments were as light. They beheld the "light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." What did they see ? They saw a man possessed by God. What is the meaning of it all for us ? He gives us the answer : "For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified."

The Son of man is not a picture, merely to be looked at by the sons of men. He is the actual of all the holy prophecies in them. This is the answer to *Cur Deus homo ?* The real and actual relation of Jesus and his Father is the ideal relation of humanity to God. The incarnation has been treated in our dogmas too much as if it were most for the sake of God. It was an ideal for men. The actual Jesus is the prophetic man. And this is what the Saviour means when he bids men follow him.

The lives of men are marked by epochs which are full of meaning. The crises in the holy life of Jesus were his baptism in Jordan, his temptation in the desert, his transfiguration on the mount, his cross on

Calvary and his triumph over death. And if we follow them in their deep meaning we shall find a revelation for ourselves.

The conscious inner wakening to his Sonship is most beautifully told. "And, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him." This was the crisis of self-revelation.

Thus in the life of those who follow Jesus there must come a wakening of the soul. The experience of Jesus must be repeated. He is the revelation to his brethren of their own ideal selves. Upon those who follow him must come the Spirit, descending like a dove, and abiding on them. To them must come the consciousness, the voice of God, witnessing that they, in prophecy and in ideal, are sons of their Father. The incarnation thus is something to be realized in man.

The next way-mark for the footsteps of the sons of men upon the path of the Son of man is in the wilderness of the temptation. "And immediately the Spirit driveth him into the wilderness. And he was there in

the wilderness forty days, tempted of Satan." He goes forth from the holy scene of baptism and consecration, inspired with the completed consciousness of his divine and sacred end in life. Here he discovers other forces working in the humanity he bears.

How true is this to the experience of his brethren! This scene is daily reproduced in their lives and it was for their sake he was submitted to it. No sooner do we become self-conscious of our highest selves than we find realization, deeper than before, of the forces that would drag us down. The analogy is not complete. Immediate and absolute victory with Jesus is with us an age-long warfare. But the conflict is the same. Thus, without sin, yet tempted like as we are, victorious through God within, does Jesus, for our sake, walk paths of discipline and climb by struggle, that we may see, exemplified in him, the truth that we are seeking to unfold, that we may rise above a life of sin only by the growing power of the Infinite within us, and by thus realizing in ourselves the incarnation.

Now the divine in Jesus emerges clear

and free. He comes forth clothed in the white robe of those who overcome. We next behold him on the mountain height. "He was transfigured before them : and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light." In this most beauteous figure we have poetic utterance of the supreme event of history. The ideal of humanity is once gained. The Son of man has walked among the sons of men, sharing their life to the extreme of evil impulse. Out of the conflict the Son of man comes forth the Son of God.

Our analogy continues. Let humanity take up its walk with Jesus Christ and two results inevitably follow. First, with the disciples on the mount, he whom they look at as the Son of man will be transfigured to them and they will see in him the Son of God.

But more than this : if the view and the contact be real, the transfiguration of Christ will become the transfiguration of men. And if you truly follow Jesus, you will thus again, in so far as you do it, experience the incarnation.

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The path of Jesus leads us now to Calvary. The cross reveals the same deep truth. The path of attainment was the road of self-renunciation and self-sacrifice. The daily following of Jesus is the way of the cross. The incarnation must again repeat itself.

We have not reached the end. Thus does man come into the world, realize a consciousness of his divine inheritance, fight the warfare of his moral life, become transfigured if he walks with Jesus, and then the clouds appear, the shades of the evening gather, the eye grows dim, the landscape fades away, the voices of the earth are lost. The end of it all is death. What an unfathomable mystery it is, that the sunrise and the twilight should be one short day ! The only answer is the answer of the incarnation.

He hath brought immortality to light. The last great epoch was his resurrection. The life of Jesus did not die because it was the life of God. The life of those who truly follow him can never end, because theirs is the life of God. The lesson is this: man

only enters heaven by and by as heaven enters him here and now. Our immortality is our appropriation and the realizing in ourselves of the same incarnation.

Let us gather up the lessons. Humanity thus finds in Jesus the pledge, the revelation and the interpretation of its own sonship with the Father. Following after him it enters the struggle of its spiritual life. Victorious through him, it is growingly transfigured and transformed. Living with him, being his life, it, with his life, must live for evermore.

The incarnation in humanity! The interpretation I have sought to give will be verified by an appeal to life, to history and to experience. It has been ever so in partial and in varying ways.

The darkness of our human life has ever been dispelled by light from heaven in the souls of good and holy men and women. The message from the Father's heart has come through human lips, and the Father's love revealed itself in human lives. As the older messages of Holy Writ have told us of their time, so in all time God has put on the

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personalities of men and sought to do his work of grace through them.

Far better than the sense of God in hill and vale, in sun and star, and all the beauties of the world in which we live, far better than inspired written page is the inspired heart which touches close our own in common paths of daily life, whose very garment carries healing in its touch.

Yes, God has touched life in many ways, reveals himself in varied forms; through far-off prophets and apostles, through tables of his holy law, but, in a nearer way, through humble men and women in our very midst.

It was a truth the Saviour taught as he revealed it. The Saviour told his Twelve that the incarnate Spirit in himself was not for him alone. He said the message of the Father's and his lips must be repeated o'er by other human tongues, the errands of his mercy done by human feet, and that the light of God to a dark world must shine through other human faces than his own. I am the light of the world, said he—and so are ye. The Father hath sent me—and I

send you. The incarnation was for them as well as for their Lord.

Now this is true in all our life. Something of God we learn from everything ; something from nature's voice and smile ; something from a holy Book ; something from the spoken truth ; and more through touch with the invisible and eternal Christ.

But revelation has not here its final end. It may be that oftener than these it comes through good and pure and holy lives close by our side, in intimacy with our daily life, which, more than they knew and more than we have thought, have spoken to us God's thoughts, have ministered to us his grace, and showed to us his heart and life.

Is it not true ? The peace of God has come. Did it not come by the quiet touch of some calm, human hand ? The tenderness and sympathy of God have come to soothe our sorrows. Was it not by the human lips of some loving child of God on earth ? Have not our fears been driven by the reassuring voice from some strong, human heart ? The tears of human sorrow have been wiped away by the Father's

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hand, but was it not the loving hand of some human child of his? Is it not almost always so?

I think if we should trace the better life that lived itself in all men down through these two thousand years, that we should find men have not, in most part, gained it by access without mediation; but while all would lead to Christ, it nearly all has come by other men and women, who, like him and following him, have been the mediators between him and his loved brethren. We all, I think, are led to God by human hearts and hands.

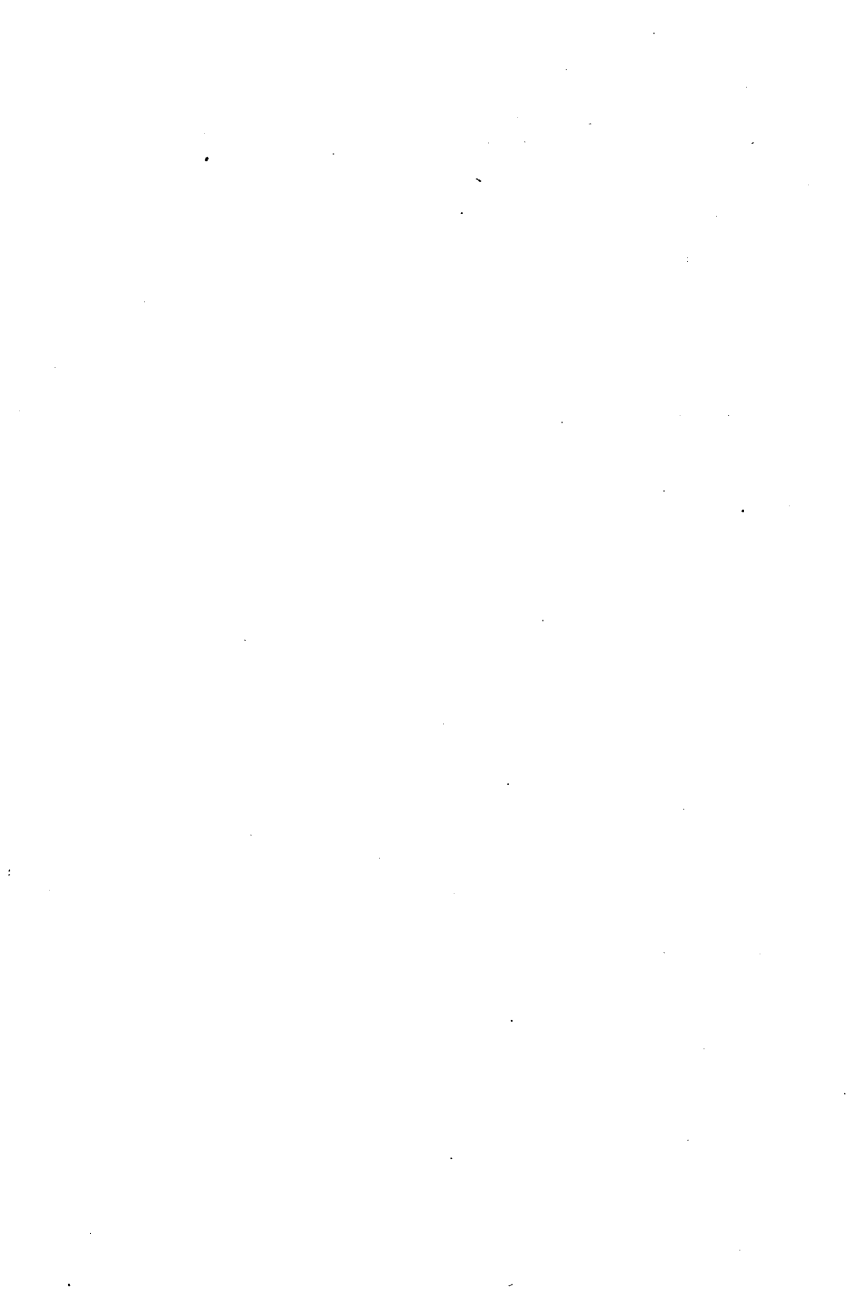
We seldom know the meaning of diviner things and qualities by any other means. We learn what love is when we see a loving woman. We see the beauty of self-sacrifice in those who sacrifice themselves. We see the truth most clearly in true men. And by them, if we will, we may be led to heaven and to God.

They tell us more than of the life that is and of the true lives of ourselves. They point and lead us to the better day that is to be. It is not by argument of men that

we believe the life that is to come. It is when we see a good life pass beyond our sight that we are lured to faith in the eternal goodness, and we feel the certainty of heaven.

Thus is the lesson of the incarnation, ineffably revealed through Jesus Christ, revealed in partial measure in the human lives that touch us now.

This then is the answer to *Cur Deus homo?* God became partaker in the life of men that men might be partakers in the life of God.



The Spirit Prayerful

He went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God.

And when it was day, . . . he came down . . . and stood in the plain, . . . there went virtue out of him, and healed them all.—*Luke 6: 12, 13, 17, 19.*

The Spirit Prayerful

THE best of us poor men and women are very weak and erring, and we every day do wrong and need forgiveness for our sins. Our lives are filled with trials and temptations, with duties and with deeply laden cares, and we are very thoughtless people if they do not sometimes weigh our spirits down, and bring us to a sense of deepest need. We live in an environment that is against our higher life, and most of us have evil in our hearts. We find it very hard not to be filled with selfishness and sin, and we need help to keep them out. Our lives are full of things which we find hard to understand. On every hand are sorrow, want and woe. Not only are we heavy-hearted for ourselves, but are forced, either to blind, selfish lives, or lives vicarious, and bearing not alone our sorrows but the burdens of our fellow men. We not only see them suffer

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but we have to do it when our human hands are weak and we most deeply feel our human helplessness. We cannot say the words we feel, nor can we give the strength we would. Sometimes men sin against us, wrong our motives, judge us falsely and bring us hours of unhappiness they never know or see.

In every day, on every hand, if we are thoughtful in our lives, and serious, and if our hearts are tender, our spirits sensitive, our consciences not seared, we feel our weakness, sorrow and our wrongs, and bear the sorrows, sins and failures of our human brothers till the burden is too great and we must seek some other help. We cannot live this life and do it as we ought without the help of heaven and of God.

Some aid we get from other men and women like ourselves. The warm and cordial clasp of friendship, the strong, loyal spirit and the touch of sympathy or tear of sorrow on our own behalf, help us each day to meet our duties and to bear our ills. But these all fail us sometimes. The friend becomes estranged by misconceiving, loyalty

grows cold and we look wistfully for the compassion of our brother when it does not come, and oft are left to weep in silence and in solitude. Thus often we may lose this help because it is withholden by misunderstanding and by doubt. Sometimes because men do not see our hearts and needs, we wait in vain. Or perhaps they do not judge us by the eye of love and give us justice when we need forgiveness.

At other times the good and patient love on which we leaned is taken from our midst. The life that carried us upon its broad, strong shoulders fades from our view. The eyes that wept with us are closed in death and we are called to mourn for that which made our sorrows bearable. This world, in which we live for three-score years and ten, has many things to give us help, but they are almost sure to fail us in the end. Its many joys and pleasures do not last. Our usage mars them and they soon fulfil their time.

These are the thoughts that make us think of heaven and of God and thus to think is to induce within ourselves the spirit prayerful.

As life becomes more real and earnest, thoughtful and sincere, it feels a need which earth and men cannot supply. It is as it grows stronger that it knows its weakness, and as it grows better that it feels its sins. And as the ties which bind us to it closest are asunder rent, we realize their temporary strength, and look for something stronger to endure. Thus does our strength make clear our weakness, thus does our growing goodness only give revelation of the better goodness we have not attained, invite confession, waken aspiration, lead us to God and tell us that we ought to pray.

In our great human weakness we must have some help from heaven. Forgiveness for our sins must come from One who can forgive. Our rightly-motivated hearts, wronged by our unjust human judges, must be viewed by One whose eye is true. The unseen tear of sorrow must be somewhere seen and with the passing of the things of time, something eternal we must have to fill our empty life. This is the spirit prayerful. We need, to live this life, to experience the help of God, to feel we are his children, that he sees our

hearts and knows our burdens, that in this blinded world some eye sees rightly and can judge us true.

We all learned once to pray, and in the evening hour, at our mother's knee, we learned to ask the help of God in the eternal language of the heart. It is the way of men, as they grow old, to set aside their childlike prayers and try to be sufficient to themselves, and in their human inconsistency, as fast as their great needs are greater, to rely upon their own weak strength. They then forget to ask whether their hearts were not much better then, as they gave utterance to the words of faith, than they are now. And many of us go on, with the increasing cares and needs of life, and every day add more forgetfulness of any need of help, and after many years we cease to pray at all.

The only perfect life that ever walked in human form, whose heart was pure, and who cherished not one single evil thought, whose deeds were holy, and whom no man of his time or since convinced of sin, felt the deep need of heavenly help and was in

constant and unceasing prayer. The Son of man must kneel in humble supplication. The sons of men think they can live and do without any help from God at all. He who was strong enough to bear our sins and sorrows felt a far greater need of help than we who sorrow and who sin. He who was good enough to be the Saviour of the world had need to say the prayers which we so confidently think we can get on without.

Let us, for a few moments, join his disciples, and with humble spirits ask him, "Teach us to pray."

In answer he will tell us we must say, "Our Father." That means that we are children and we must like children pray. We must be humble and obedient, with a childlike faith and trust, feeling our ignorance and our want of strength.

And we must say, "OUR Father," for other men and women are his children too—the poor whom we forget, and the bad whom we despise. And if he is their Father and is also ours, and both we and they are thus his children, they are our brothers and our sisters; and if we do not love them we

are not fit to pray, for we cannot say "OUR Father." Remember, then, you cannot pray unless you love God's other children, and if you ever try to do it, it can never find an echo in the heart of God.

It means all men. It means your friend, and it must mean your enemy as well. We shall have human brotherhood, of which men talk to-day so much, when all men kneel together and together say, "Our Father."

"Our Father which art in heaven." In heaven—not some well-meaning but near-seeing earthly one, but one who sees our needs more clearly than we see them and who sometimes must correct our erring prayers, and give us, not the things we asked, but those for which we ought to pray.

"Hallowed be thy name." Name, in the old Semitic speech in which the Master spoke, means character and will. Reverence for God, translated into language of an earthly life, means sense of sacredness for those things which are good and holy. It is not superstitious awe. It is the simple love of goodness and of truth. It is the

lifting of our souls above the rude, unhallowed ways of men.

“Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth.” We must want righteousness, on earth. It is not praying for a far-off heaven for our selfish selves, but wanting to bring in the heavenly life to our own hearts and to the lives of men.

“Thy will be done.” God sees and seeks for us the highest good we cannot see or seek; and if we ask for things that hurt us, as our earthly child so often does of us, he will be a true Father and withhold from us the stone we blindly ask, and give us bread instead.

“Give us this day our daily bread.” The highest thought in this is the sense of our dependence. We partly earn these things, but they are God’s gifts, and in the toil of life we need the guidance of the Father’s hand.

“Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.” This is a double prayer. It is, first of all, confession; then it asks for charity and love. Think of its meaning: “Lord, treat me as I treat my fellow men.” It

means that your sin must stand unforgiven if you have refused your brother's prayer to you.

Confession of our sins is not salvation, nor will it give us heaven. The life above us must be risen to. The next phrase of this prayer means, "May we not sin to-day," and better than the prayer for daily bread is this, "May we be good and true."

This prayer of Jesus is enough, if we do more than say it with our lips. By it we shall remember that we have a Father and we are his children. With its thought in our hearts we shall love all his children and be good to them. We shall both love and hallow goodness, and in all things try to do his holy will. We shall receive the gifts of life with grateful hearts and vest the lowly toil of daily life in sacred meanings. It will lead us to forgive and be forgiven. And we shall, if we say it in our hearts, find ourselves growing better in our lives.

Now it is true that prayer is an atmosphere in which to live and is not bound by formal times or words. Yet most of us are such frail creatures that we need somewhat

to live by regulation and by rule. Even the Son of man, whose very thought was prayer, had need to draw apart and had his hours of prayer. It may be our need is as great as his.

The morning hour helps to start the day aright. If we begin each day with grateful recognition of our blessings they will seem better when they come. If we confess our past transgression, we shall be watchful for the sin awaiting us. Many of the conflicts of the day we might win in advance, before the day begins.

And if at eventide we feel commended to the care of God, we shall be better men and women. I think, for most of us, whose lives are crossed with care, and occupied with toil throughout the busy day, we need an evening and a morning hour.

I ever need to ask of Him who guides our spirits, that I may by Him be led, and that

“ What conscience dictates to be done,
Or warns me not to do,
This, teach me more than hell to shun,
That, more than heaven pursue.

"What blessings thy free bounty gives
Let me not cast away,
For God is paid when man receives ;
To enjoy is to obey.

"If I am right, thy grace impart
Still in the right to stay.
If I am wrong, oh, teach my heart
To find the better way.

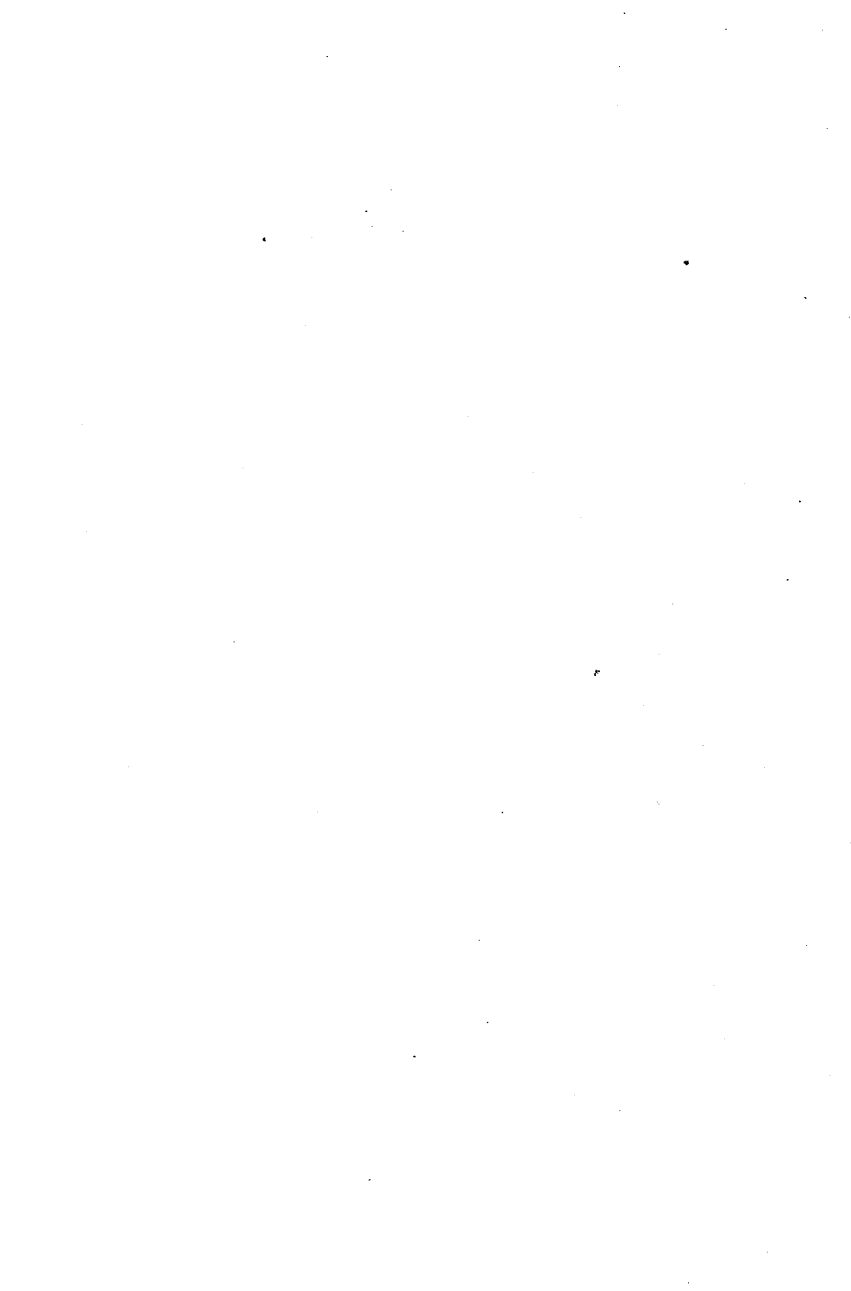
"Save me alike from foolish pride,
Or impious discontent,
At aught thy wisdom has denied,
Or aught thy goodness lent.

"Teach me to feel another's woe,
To hide the fault I see,
That mercy I to others show,
That mercy show to me.

"This day be bread and peace my lot ;
All else beneath the sun,
Thou know'st if best bestowed or not,
And let thy will be done."

THE SPIRIT PRAYERFUL

"Shall not this spirit calm our hearts and bid vain conflicts cease?
Ay, when we commune with our God in holy hours of peace
And feel that by the lights and clouds through which
our pathway lies,
By the beauty and the grief alike we are training for
the skies."



The Life Christlike

And when it was day, . . . he came down
. . . , and stood in the plain, . . . there went virtue
out of him, and healed them all.—*Luke 6: 13, 17, 19.*

The Life Christlike

UPON the mountainside the Saviour spent all night in prayer to God.

“And when it was day, . . . stood in the plain, . . . and healed men by his virtue.”

When the eternal Father of all men and women sought to reveal his will and love most perfectly to them, he did it through a human life. And it is true that when men bow in reverence to the name of Christ, they worship and adore the God whom he reveals. But this was not the Father's final motive in the incarnation. He did not mean that men should only worship and accept in faith. The Christ is more than a sublime, attractive picture for our gaze and admiration. He came, not only to reveal his Father, but to bring his Father's life into the life of men, that they, too, might, through him, become true sons of God. We never can attain the

infinite ideal for us by worship and confession, nor alone by supplication. It must be also by a way of living.

The Son of man walked this same earth, was tempted like as we are, bore human sorrows and endured our human pains, that he might teach us how to meet temptation, bear our troubles and our disappointments, and yet live a good and holy life. He showed us how the life of heaven might be lived on earth. He suffered for our sins, not only that we might receive forgiveness, but that we might forbear to sin. We live again, not only because he lives, but because he lives in us. We enter heaven just as he did, and by walking in his way.

Remember, then, that not by our confession of the church's faith, or by our admiration of his attributes, or by our saying Lord and Master, enter we the kingdom, but by the observance of the Father's holy will. It is not a matter of the head, or of the outward attitude, but of the heart and spirit and the life. A holy life like that of Jesus was the true and adequate expression of the way, and we must more than worship and

believe upon the mount ; yea, we must follow him upon the plain.

The entrance to the way is by confession. Repentance and contrition let us in. Both faith and prayer will lead us to the way, but they are not the way itself.

This is the Christlike life.

It is a life of righteousness. Moral goodness is its end and goal. By this we do not mean mere outward life of rules and regulations, but the moral goodness of the inner heart. Our lights must shine that men may see our good works and by them glorify our Father, and reveal the way. To love the Saviour is to keep his law of love. The hunger and the thirst for righteousness is the first motive of the Christlike life. Except our righteousness exceed the churchly righteousness of scribe and Pharisee, we are not in the kingdom. *The Christlike life is one of good, plain, common goodness.* We must not say the thing that is false. We must not be extorters from the poor. We must be just and honest and upright. The aim of life is to be good and true.

It is not righteousness in the stern form

of rigid and bare justice. It pays its earthly debts, but it must go beyond this; it must pay the debts of other men. For it is a life of love. Though we have tongues of men and voices of the angels, if we have not love we are but sounding brass. Though we be gifted with the outlook of the prophet, have all Christian knowledge, and a faith that moves the hills, we are as nothing, if we have not love. And if we feed the poor and do it not from loving hearts, it is no worthy sacrifice. We may be martyrs at the burning stake of truth, and if it be not love that suffers, it availeth nothing.

The Christlike life is one of love that suffers long, is patient with the sins of other men, and looks upon them with the constant, and unfailing, and uplifting eye of kindness.

Its heart must never know the miserable thought of envy or the mean, jealous spirit. It seeketh not its own, but has a thought and care for other men. It is not easily provoked to wrath and does not set itself to find out all the evil that it can in other men, does not report iniquity when found,

but gives itself to looking everywhere for truth and making its rejoicing in it. It is glad for every joy for every man, and sorrows for their evils and their wrongs. It bears all things in fortitude, believes in men, lifts them by its kindly faith, and hopeth for the goodness that it fails to see. The Christlike life had for itself a new commandment given, that we love one another.

This brings us to the truest and the widest sphere of the Christlike life. It is not in the church. It is a life with God in prayer. It is a following of Christ in faith. But if we follow Christ, he leads us, not away from earth at once to heaven but from heaven to earth, from the mountain to the plain. We find his footsteps on the paths of men.

He says to his disciples that they must do all the things they do for him. But he has shown, and shown them very simply, how it is for him. He is hungered and we must give him meat; is thirsty and we must give him drink; naked and we must clothe him; sick, and we must go and help him, with the touch of human sympathy and love. In every hum-

ble man and woman in our midst, he dwells. And insomuch as we neglect to minister to them, we turn our backs on him. And insomuch as, of the very least of them, we serve the needs, we honor and adore and witness to our love for him and God.

“Who counts his brother’s welfare
As sacred as his own,
And loves, forgives, and pities,
He serveth Me alone.”

The larger realm of Christian life is not the cloistered abbey, nor is it yet the shadowed closet of our prayers; it is our common, daily life.

The life of Jesus, much of it, was spent, as I have told you in our other meditations, as we must spend much of ours, upon the mountainside, in quiet solitude, with God. His was a life of prayer, as ours should be. But more of it was spent in loving ministration to the needs of men upon the plain.

And he said rather more of this than of our sacrifice and prayer. His sternest and severest words were for religious men devouring widows’ houses and for pretence praying long.

His words were very strongly put, and though they shame us we must not forbear to hear them. We must not show an angry spirit to our brother without cause. If we do, we are in danger of the wrath of God. The sacrifice upon the altar must stay without acceptance while we go and render the forgiveness to our brother, which we ask ourselves of God. And if that brother sin for seven days against us, seventy times a day, we must each day and time forgive him if he ask.

Is evil rendered us, we must not render evil back, but good. To recompense we have no right. So earnestly must we remove the beam from our own eye, that we shall have no time to hunt for motes, and have no right to do so in our brother's. We must give to those in need that ask. And never may we stir up strife, but ever seek among men all good-will and peace.

To judge men is not our prerogative, and only he who has committed no sin can cast the first stone at him who has. If men wrong us we must show them mercy and repay their wrong with love.

The Christlike life is one that loves its neighbors, but it cannot hate its foes ; must love its enemies, bless those who curse it, do good to those who hate it, and must pray that good may come to those who do it any wrong.

We must love the Lord our God, and we must love our neighbor just as truly as we love ourselves. In everything we must do to others the things we would have others do to us.

“ To worship rightly is to love each other :
Each smile a hymn, each kindly deed a prayer.”

“ Each loving life a psalm of gratitude.”

This is not all. We must remember that the Christlike life ever goes deeper than the outward act. We must do alms, but we must never do them for the sake of praise. We must not give, nor ever do our good, because it makes us feel contented with ourselves. We may heap coals of fire on our adversary's head, but we must never do it simply that he should be shamed by it. We must not only keep from evil deeds, but do

so by the banishment of sinful thoughts. Our motives must be pure.

This is a very deep and searching thought. If we are honest men because we love to hear men call us honest, then we are dishonest men. We must be more than whited sepulchers. Our good works, if we do them to be seen of men, are no longer works of good. If we think hatred it is as bad as if we killed. We must not only lead chaste lives and pure, but cease to wish for things unholy and impure.

Some men find their religion, so it seems, in fasts and prayers, in their confessions and their faiths. Some others say they find it, not in these things, but in righteousness of life. There is no argument between the two. If in real truth we do the one, we must do the other.

The heart that comes from a true prayer, an earnest worship in the sacred place, will find itself led on to a better and a truer life. Likewise he who really sees the greatness and the depth of the Christlike life, which must love its foes as well as its friends, must love other men as well as itself, must do good

deeds from a pure heart, can never have the self-sufficiency that makes him think he can get on and gain it without God and prayer. The spirit prayerful and the Christlike life are one. The one is the condition of the other.

“He only feels his burdens fall
Who, taught by suffering, pities all.”

First, you must pray or you will not have strength to do the good you ought. Then, you must try to do the good you ought, that God may hear your prayer. For his holy justice tells him he must do to you as you do to other men. You have refused forgiveness to your brother for his one hundred pence, and now you pray for the remittance of ten thousand talents. In true justice God refuses. It is a loving justice, for by it he seeks to make you better and more loving.

There is a heaven beyond. But we find the road and access to it not by pushing by, but by passing through, the human lives about us and between us and our goal. There is the Christ and the Christlike life. He puts his every brother between himself

and you, and your way lies through the human hearts and lives—the sympathies, and needs, and sorrows, and joys of all your brothers and your sisters. They are the mediators of your prayers. They speak to God against you or on your behalf. The real gifts you render to your God and Christ are the things you give to them.

“What doth that holy Guide require?

No rite of pain, nor gift of blood,
But man a kindly brotherhood,
Looking, where duty is desire,
To him, the beautiful and good.”

“The law of Hatred disappear,
The law of Love alone remain.”

The way of faith is the path of love. The offering acceptable is a good heart. The Christian life is the life like Christ's.

“He went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God.”

“And when it was day . . . he came down, . . . and stood in the plain, . . . there went virtue out of him, and healed them all.”

The life Christlike needs the spirit prayerful; and the spirit prayerful must become the life Christlike.

Surrender and Sacrifice

For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it.—*Matt. 16: 25.*

Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.—*Gal. 6: 2.*

Surrender and Sacrifice

WE have been trying in these meditations, and in a very simple, humble way, to see the Christlike life, know what it is, and make it deeper in ourselves. By quiet hours of self-contemplation, by simple-hearted prayer, and through the thoughtful nurture of the inner life, we were to gain, from day to day, a good and growing spiritual life. Thus we may acquire a character within ourselves which seeks a goal of righteousness, and looks up to the Father with a heart of faith, and on our brothers with the eye of love. This life is to be won by taking Christ and his life as our pattern, and by following him, not by an outward conformation only, but with the deeper motive of the inward heart.

If we will seek the ground and ultimate of Jesus' good and holy life, it will be in the perfect and complete surrender of his

will and life to God. It was as Jesus said : I do not mine own will, but his that sent me. The words that I speak are not mine, but what he teacheth me to speak. To one who was a master and a teacher in the house of Israel, who came by night to learn from One who was a teacher come from God, he said: Ye must again, and from above, be born. That is, ye must have in you life from God. Your life must be his Spirit. It must be in you, a well of water springing up unto eternal life.

My very meat and drink, he said, is doing the will of him that sent me. The Son does nothing of himself, but what he sees the Father do. I can, of mine own self, do nothing. My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me, and I speak those things which I have heard of him. I always do the things that please him and I seek not mine own glory. As the Father gave to me commandment, so I do.

The life of Jesus was surrender to the will of God.

The very heart of sin is selfishness. It is our will against God's. The very

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heart of righteousness is giving up of self. And if it were essential that the Son of man should yield himself, shall the servant be greater than his Lord, and shall we think that our own wills and selves are right ?

When Jesus said they must do this, they took up stones and cast at him. That they should bend themselves, give up their inclinations, forget their own glory, and thus make their wills another's, was too hard a saying for them.

It is a truth that is hard for men to-day,—the bending of our wills to God. We want the things of life to be our way. We feel that we know best the things we ought to have, and every day act towards our heavenly Father just as our own unruly, wilful children act towards us.

Two requisites are necessary for a happy home—a father strong and loving, and a willing child. A good, strong will, that wills in love what is best, and the child who trusts his father. We see the need of this in our own homes. How many times they want and ask the thing that will not

do them good! How needful that they should surrender to a wiser and a better judgment! They sometimes think we are unloving and unjust. Just as they are to us, so we are to our Father. We oft and again forget that he is wisdom, that he sees the ends of things, while we are unwise, short of sight and only see the present moment.

As Jesus prayed, so must we pray, Thy will be done, not mine. Our weakness must surrender to God's strength. Our ignorance to his wisdom must defer. Our erring steps must be guided by his loving hand. He knows what is the best for us. He needs sometimes to let us suffer, that we shall not fail again; at other times that we may have compassion in our hearts and feel the sympathy which is so beautiful an element in character. He knows our very hearts far better than we do ourselves. He leads us better than we lead ourselves. Just as an earthly child grows best who does the earthly parent's will, so we shall do, for we are children. It is the only way to learn the truth. He only can reveal himself to

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such as do his will. Yes, we are children. God is our Father. We shall do best to let him guide his household. We must give up to God.

One thing we must make clear. He will not force us. He lets us, if we will, go our own ways, frustrate his plans, undo his work, renounce his rule, be our own teachers, and get on without him. He is no irate monarch wanting slaves to trample beneath his feet. It is children that he wants, to trust his goodness. And he would have us yield our wills to his, not for the glory of his power, but that he may do us good and lead us right. He wants our love and trust.

If this become our spirit, we shall know how to be abased without depression, to abound without self-glory, and both joy and sorrow shall unite to make us better. Our weary hours will be refreshed. We shall forget our foes and only see our friends. When men shall fail we shall not fall. And we shall seek, not men to help us, but men that we may help. Our humble ignorance will gain us knowledge,

our faith grow into sight, our weakness shall become our strength, and the forgiven sin shall be our righteousness. Without this humble spirit, in no age, among no men, was ever truth proclaimed, or deed of heroism done, or wrong righted, and no saviours would the world have had.

With all of us, sometimes, the gloom encircles, and the night is dark. The distant scene we cannot see. One step must be enough, and we must pray the kindly light, "Lead on." To choose and see the path we may desire, but cannot, and must pray, "Lead on,

"O'er moor and fen, o'er crag and torrent, till
The night is gone."

The kindly light is but the glimmer that suggests the coming day, and with the morn the goodness we have loved and lost awhile shall live again.

What other can we do? Suppose the light be dim, and sometimes for a moment almost altogether lost. It is the only light there is, and if we do not follow it, we walk in an unglimmered darkness. In this some-

times perplexing world, we must do all we can, and trust in God.

One further and last thought I seek to bring you. It is the most appropriate of all. God, in his character and will, identifies himself with Christ. So then the giving up of self to God is giving up to Christ. The Son of man, in one most deeply searching utterance, identified himself with all the sons of men. If these be truths, surrender of oneself to God is sacrifice of self for men.

If we look down the paths of history and pick out men revered and loved, they will be only those who left the path of plain and common, rigid duty, and went out beyond themselves and all the strict requirements of naked justice. They will not be those men who always sought to do the just enough, but those who did both that and more. Nor will they be the anchorites who only say their prayers in isolation from the life of men. There is no grandeur, nor is there any beauty, in the calculating conscience that seeks to do the thing required. The heroes that have sanctified the human record

are not men of muttered prayers, nor are they men of cautious, careful righteousness. The gospel is more than this kind of moral goodness. It finds its full expression, not in the stony decalogue, but in the cross on Calvary.

The goodness that remains at home is only seeming such. The gospel teaches that we must do all we can, and then we must do more. Its spirit does not ask, What is my share? How many times shall I forgive? Just how much do I owe?

If this were right, it is not possible. How much we owe we cannot tell. The wrongs that we incite and ought to pay for, we cannot compute. And how much less can we make balances, if it be true that we are held for all the wrongs we might prevent; if it be that we must repay not only all the suffering we have caused, but all that we might have relieved!

There is no self-salvation. Renouncement is the holy law of acquisition. The finest, and the final, and the only form of goodness is the sacrifice of self. The giving that costs nothing is no gift. He who gives what he

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can afford, and adds no more, may square his obligation, but he gains no grace.

These things are not two contradictions;—our self-culture and the sacrifice of self. The last is not destructive of the first, and must not be so used. We cannot give unless we gain. We must acquire that we may impart. But unless we impart we soon shall cease to gain. He who is careful of his gifts, and satisfies himself with little giving, will dwarf his soul and soon be satisfied with very little goodness in himself.

It is a mean and miserable spirit that avers, "I will look after my own obligations. If men are suffering it is by their own fault, not mine. I do my share; I cannot pay their bills." If God should treat us as we treat our fellows, in pure justice and refusing grace, we should be lost.

No, we are born into a world whose very law is sacrifice. Motherhood begins it and continues to the end. It is the very law of life. The very cosmic processes proclaim it. Not one thing lives except by help of something else. In nature, in our human life, and in the realm of spirit, refusal to coop-

erate, exchange and give, is everywhere decay and death.

There never was a self-made man. All that we have we owe to some one else, and finally to God our Father. When shall our obligation cease and when the book be closed? When we have ceased to sin and have atoned for all the wrongs we ever did.

He who would follow Christ must with him bear a cross. He must not only live his life upright and strong, but help his fellow men to live and be their strength; he must with brave heart bear his own sorrows, but only by the bearing of another's burdens can he fulfil the law of Christ. The path is that of Jesus and the way of Jesus is the way of the cross. We keep our lives by giving them to God and Christ and men.

The Ministry of Suffering

Perfect through sufferings.—*Heb. 2: 10.*

The Ministry of Suffering

“PERFECT through sufferings.”

Thus spake a sufferer of one who suffered. For the writer of these words was one who sat at the great apostle's feet, had shared his life, and gives the echo of his thought. The life of that apostle, like that of Him whose noble slave he was, was full of suffering and care. He was a man whose days were full of “weariness and painfulness,” “in watchings often,” in hunger, thirst and fastings, stripes and prisons and in deaths and dyings oft, and who in his body bore the marks of Jesus Christ; one who had nought to glory in but tribulation, and who could say, “I have been crucified with Christ.” It was not out of theoretic, theologic formula, but out of deep experience that the great apostle to the suffering Gentiles preached, above all things, the cross of Christ.

Our simple human thought, moved by its finer feelings, has ever felt the sacrifice and suffering of Jesus to give the finer beauty and the deeper meaning to his holy life, and it is only when those feelings are taken from their sacred place and lost amid the dogmas of the mind, that they are made misleading.

More than the Saviour's priceless words of truth, more than his character of perfect beauty, Gethsemane and Calvary have ever touched the hearts and purified the lives of men.

The argument of the epistle is in the form of an analogy. Christ is the interpretation of humanity. There is essential likeness between his followers and himself. What he did they must try to do, and his experience must be their experience, too. If they would live with him they must be dead with him. If with him they would reign, they must with him suffer. As he was perfected by sufferings, so they must be perfected.

Of much of our suffering we can see the meaning. It is the consequence of our own wilfulness, and we are conscious that

we merit it. All this is but the needful chastening of a good and loving Father, and it is not hard to understand it and approve.

But after this a larger residue of pain and sorrow yet remains in almost every life, which we are called to reconcile with our conception of a loving God and Father. The answer of the heavy, questioning heart is not immediate or simple. Now and again our hearts beat with the ancient sage of Tennyson:

“The world is dark with griefs and graves,
So dark that men cry out against the heavens.”

Whoever has not thought of it, bewildered, and in temporary darkness and despair, has never suffered, or he does not think.

The oldest argument was that the gods were angry. Men get what they deserve. It is no answer. The comforters of Job gave him no satisfaction and they give none to us. It is not true that good men do not suffer and that only bad men do. It may be truer that more suffering comes to good men, with their finer spirits, than to bad,

and with the Psalmist we are baffled when the wicked flourish as the bay-tree and God's children suffer their injustice and their hate. To say that human suffering is the issue of our individual sin and is our rightful retribution violates our consciousness and does not meet the simple facts of life.

Modern philosophy has sought to make it clear by showing us that it is an inevitable contrast. Our consciousness, said Mr. Fiske, is variation and incessant change. If human palates knew naught else but sweetness, then nothing would be sweet. Nothing is seen or known or felt, except by contrast with its opposite. The physiologist will tell us that without a nervous system susceptible and capable of pain, no pleasure would be possible. The ultimate of this explaining is that our suffering is needful to our contrasting joy, and thus a happy world must be a world where happiness exists against its necessary background of suffering and pain.

This argument seems true. We see that there can be no this without a that, no here

without a there, that all things are, and only can be, known by their contrasts.

But who will say that the answer of philosopher and scientist gives final satisfaction to the moral and the spiritual longings of an aching human heart?

We must go deeper into our subject. The dark and haunting doubt is not dispelled. God is our Father, we his children. But will a Father let his children suffer if the power of the universe is his, and he can help it?

We must believe God cares for these things, knows our sorrows and our pains, and is not indifferent when we mourn and suffer. Another thing, though, we must not forget: that most of all he wants his children to be good and loving, to have tender sympathies and gentle hearts. He wants them to be like himself.

He wants us to be like himself. Have you ever thought of that? The painters of the old-world ages left us pictures which portray the bleeding heart of Christ. They oftentimes repel us as depicting scenes too sacred for the eye. But they convey a truth.

Gethsemane and Calvary do tell to us the story of the suffering heart of God. God suffers! Have you ever thought of that? For if it be not true, he is no Father.

The heavenly fatherhood is not impaired if it be true that pain and sorrow make us better men and women. And do they not? The writer of our text has given us our answer. We are perfected through our suffering.

One truth is clear to all who deeply think on human life. It is that human hearts and lives are moved, not by ideas alone, but by experience. The ultimate of human character lies in its deepest feelings. We cannot state or teach the qualities of love, of sacrifice, of patience, tenderness and sympathy in propositions of the mind. They must be felt.

The satisfaction of our answer to the mystery before us will depend upon our final view of life. If life's purpose should be viewed as the avoidance of all pain and the everlasting quest for that which men call pleasure, then there is no ministry of sorrow. But if life has its spiritual ends and

aims there is. If we shall say, "For me to live is—pleasure," we shall see no good in pain. But if we say, "For to me to live is Christ," our view will change.

The Psalmist tells us how he once saw through the clouds and mystery and viewed the truth. It was, he said, "too painful for me; until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I." Into the sanctuary of God. Here only do we see things aright. The only final answer to life's deepest questions is the answer of religion.

All those attractive pages of biography and history on which we linger, tell of endurance, courage, patience, charity and love. The story of the saints is the history of suffering. Nothing ever has been gained without it. It is the very story of development. Truth has been won, but never except by it. There never was a holy life without it and every saviour of the world since Christ has gone to Calvary with him.

But we need not go outside our own small lives. Would any of us banish tender sympathy and sacrificing love from moral life? Would we have hearts that would

not vibrate with compassion? Would we live in a world where love was all unknown? And is there any love but sacrifice? And is there any sacrifice that does not suffer? Where is the mother who would yield the holy privilege of suffering for the child? If there be such she is no mother.

I do not think we ever love until we suffer. It is the price we pay for love. And if we love we pay that price.

This is the ministry of suffering. It is the sole condition of everything that is good. Without it one can never be the mother or the father, the husband or the wife, the lover or the friend. It is the very cost of womanhood and manhood. And we are brought thus to a paradox which is the very heart of truth: our suffering is the highest and the best of all our pleasures and our joys. It is the finding of our life by losing it.

This tells us how we ought to meet it. Is it the wrestling with a religious doubt? An easy way is to give up and take a creed or church, and cease to think because it is

so painful. There is another way. It is to meet it bravely and be made stronger by our wrestling.

Ignoble souls will seek to hide from it. The worst of human sins is the drowning of our sorrows. The truly noble soul will not forget its grief, and its true prayer will be, not that it should be taken from our lives, but that we may let it do its work of grace and beauty.

When all is said, it is true that we have yet a mystery. We all are very like our children. They cannot understand our ways with them. And least of all can they see why we let them suffer for the things they want and think they ought to have.

Thus are the ways of God with us. Yes,

“The world is dark with griefs and graves,
So dark that men cry out against the heavens.”

But

“Who knows but that the darkness is in man?
The doors of night may be the gates of Light.”

Some light there is, perhaps, at least, enough.

I have not sought to answer philosophic

doubt. I have only tried to give the answer of religion. I believe there is no other to life's deepest questions.

"When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me; until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I." And the truest sanctuary of God is the experience of the soul. It is the only oracle we have.

"Perfect through sufferings." Is it not surely true of men and women whom we know? Does it not soften human hearts and make more beautiful our human lives?

The deepest lesson, perhaps, we have yet to see. Is it not true of all of us, the best of us, that in the common course of life, when all goes smooth and well, our lives uninterrupted by disaster, disappointment and discomfort, we are wont to fall into neglect of God and spiritual things? Are not our sorrows things that make us humble, prayerful, thoughtful? The ministry of sorrow is thus to deepen joy, to touch the elements in us that are the finest, to strengthen us by conflict and lead us nearer God. Then it is no unmeaning thing to say

that the house of mourning may be better than the place of feasting. Thus may we pray that God will make us glad according to the days of our affliction, and the light affliction for a moment will work for us eternal weight in glory as we come to be perfected by our suffering.

Thus far we think of our own personal suffering and the bearing of it. Let us think once again upon our text. It has another truth. The suffering of Jesus, by which he was perfected, was not only of his own deep griefs, not for himself alone, but for his brethren and for us. When some of his disciples turned their backs on him, it was for them he sorrowed most, not for himself. It was far deeper; and reasoning from this the writer of our text goes on to say that Jesus was made thus like his brethren, that his brethren should be made like unto him. The culture of the cross is gained, the lesson of the school of Calvary is learned, the law of Jesus is fulfilled, not when we see the beauty of his sacrifice and learn by it to bear our own sorrows patiently. Not by the bearing of our own, but of one

another's burdens do we fulfil the law of Christ. Have you ever tried to do it when it did not make you better men and women?

The philosopher may raise unanswerable doubts, the praying saint may not be able to explain away the mysteries. But some things we may see and know and feel: that suffering ever is the way of holiness, the purifier of our hearts; that rooms with beds of pain are often sanctuaries; that the weakened hands which we seek to uplift, are more uplifting us, and that "our sweetest songs are those which tell of saddest thought."

Yes, some things we may know: that sorrow drives the thoughts of evil from our spirits, deepens our divinest loves, makes kinder all our hearts, and makes us better, holier men and women; that the ministry of suffering is the perfection of our spirits, and is thus a thing of beauty which is an eternal joy.

The Life Immortal
(An Easter Meditation)

Ye have eternal life.—1 John 5:13.

The Life Immortal

WE gather here this morning with the voice and heart of faith. The substance of that faith is this : that Jesus leads us through the paths of our divinest and best life. We are to follow him ; to go with him to baptism, receive the heavenly summons and with him devote our lives to good and sacred ends, that with him in the wilderness we may overcome the evil, pursue the way of discipline and climb by struggles. We are to take our walk with him, do good, and be transfigured by it. We are to take with him the road of Calvary, share in his cross, and live by dying to ourselves and sacrifice for other men. This is the Christian way on earth.

At Calvary his earthly race came to an end. And so with us. We enter on this life, discover in ourselves a striving soul of goodness, fight out our warfare, bear our

many sorrows, and often when the deepest joys of life have just begun, the dark clouds gather, the shades of evening fall, the sun goes down, our eyes become so dim we cannot see the forms we love, nor can we longer hear the tender voices of affection. The long night cometh for us all too soon. What seems but the beginning is the end, the sunrise and the twilight but one brief day, and life goes out, into an unseen and an unknown world.

Is this the end to which the paths of Christian faith have led? Or are we still led on, and does the Master take us on beyond the vale to share his own unbroken life? Is it the evening or the morning hour, or is it both?

“If a man die, shall he live again?” It is an ancient and a universal and a very solemn question. The first of men who walked the earth, in death’s dread presence must have asked it. However thoughtless of eternal things, and many men are so, all who have lived since him have sometimes echoed it. And though men sometimes are so base that they can speak of it in levity

and mirth, it ought to still us with the sense of our eternal selves. It is the deepest and profoundest question of the human heart and mind. If it be answered by a dread negation, and as some men have said, the grave ends all, then human life and human love are but a mockery and lie. But if the answer be that men shall live again, the vistas of untrodden futures are invested with attractiveness and glory, may not repel us with an awful dread, but lure us onward and make all our joys, our struggles and our disappointments to glow with an eternal goodness.

The older Holy Scriptures asked the question, gave us some passing glimpses of an unseen hope, but no certain answer—asked it with hesitating voice and almost left it where they found it.

The doubt, suspense and stammering speech of psalmist, prophet and priest came to an end two thousand years ago. True and completed human life had never been before revealed, and when it was, its destiny became assured. It came in no uncertain tones. Jesus spoke as never man before

had spoken. I live, and as I live, ye also shall not die.

The faith in an immortal life grows with the mind and heart of man. Both as desire and aspiration, and as trust and faith, its fineness, fervency and power have kept advance with the increasing spirit culture of the race. It has not been confined, as some self-vaunting men have thought, to timid and to slavish, superstitious souls. The lowly and unlearned indeed desire and hope. So have the finest minds and choicest spirits among men.

The most imposing figure of the century in which he lived, in the great world of literary art, proclaimed, at three score years and ten, this article of faith as power to alleviate, to sanctify his daily toil, to make him strong and patient, wise and just, aspiring and humble, and described it as perpetual vision of a better world whose shining pierced the darkness of his present life of bitter persecution and unjust, unholy judgment. His faith became conviction, and the sacred consolation of Victor Hugo's soul was the supreme conviction of his great and

finely cultured mind. With all the wealth of thought he poured upon us, he declared that though he spoke his thoughts in prose and history, philosophy and verse, romance, tradition, satire, ode and song, he had not said the thousandth part within him, and that though his long day's work was finished he could not say his life was done.

The poets of our life are men who have transformed our highest wishes into hope and faith, reached our ideals, expressed them for us, and made real to us the things our better selves have sought, and felt, but could not say.

Amid legendary mists of ancient Greece the oldest of the poets that we know gave whisperings of faith in the eternity of spirit. Then the immortal Dante came and gathered for us all things round the eternal and the infinite love.

The bard of Avon, whom all men have loved, tells the superiority of goodness to the circumstance of severed human love, exalts the spiritual gain of earthly loss, and beautifully speaks of the immortal longings in us. The Vale of Grasmere spoke eternal

thoughts to Wordsworth, and gave prophecy, with all its quiet beauty, of another country beautiful beyond. Our own transcendent poet, whose lofty heights of soul and mind no men among his age could reach, whose thought shut out the earth, and lived in heaven, pierced the vale and entered life through death before it came. While Browning saw the evolution of the soul and by it beheld the glory of a growingly perfected imperfection, not far away was Tennyson declaring to himself the moral inconceivability that his deep love could perish.

In their adjustment of the poet's faith and sight to reason, philosophers have done their sacred work, and even Cicero, the oldest of them, sees in death the living change of an abode. Lotze, both scientist and thinker, affirmed eternity of spirit in all things good, while Ferrier declared the inconceivability of death, announced it as unthinkable, and thus eternal life as necessary thought, the image of reality. The greatest of them all was Kant, and he saw, in the progress of our spirits to a goal, that to attain their end, an infinite future must be, and in the greatness

of both mind and heart, could say : "I do not fear to die."

In our day, more than in any other day before, science here gives the helping, not the hindering, hand to faith.

Perhaps you say in answer to all this, What does it mean to me that these have seen the light? The help is this: that other men, whose vision and whose minds are clearer than our own, may help us in our blindness by a guiding hand. It is as if we wandered with a guide whose clearer sight beholds ahead the light to which we move but which we cannot see, tells us it is there, and we make his sight our own until we gain the vision for ourselves. I willingly confess the things that I believe, in part because good men, and better men, than I, believed and saw them. Thus, on the grounds of moral goodness in the Infinite, of reason and of love revealed in his creation, and the sacred worth of human souls and lives, these men have come together on the grounds of faith.

Without this hope in an immortal life, there can be no religion worth the name. We cannot say "Our Father," for if he

leaves us here to struggle and to suffer for no end, he is not our Father and he is not good. If death be final, the universe is but a reckless chaos and it has no reason in it. The worth of human life is gone, for its ideals are false and its best aspirations hopeless.

“ We know this earth is not our sphere,
For we cannot so narrow us, but that
We still exceed it.”

But is the song of poet and reasoning of philosophic mind all that we have, or is there something that is more our own? Do *we* not feel within ourselves the things they have expressed for us? Have we not asked with one of them —

“ Shall friendship—love—shall all those ties
That bind a moment, and then leave us,
Once again be found ? ”

We all have known the sad and hard, but deep and rich experience, of standing by the side of the loved form of some good, noble soul that has left us—one that has made an impress on our spirits, enriched us with

its graces here, inspired by its thought, exalted our ideals and helped us by its goodness; that has transformed our evil into penitence, has moved upon the waters of our soul, inspired our hopes, led us in love, spent itself for us, and made us long for its own goodness. Have such not led us out beyond their graves, and in their light have we not seen the unseen world? We feel their spirits do not leave us. They are immortal here when they are gone. They live with us, and still uphold and guide us, strengthen our weakened hands and still rebuke us for our sins and help us by their love.

Do they do this, and yet can we say they themselves are not? Do they not say, "I live; because I live ye also shall not die"?

How often God and heaven are with us here, although we wist it not! Some day

"We shall behold thee, face to face,
O God, and in thy light retrace
How in all we loved here, still wast thou!"

The words such lives repeat to us

are but the echo of our Christian faith. The life of Jesus is our final ground of hope because it gathers in itself all truth and love and goodness, all those things which are immortal as the God who gave them.

The evidences of our immortality are not alone in Jesus' resurrection, but are in the life that rose. That life was both divine and human. It revealed in perfect measure the sharing of God's life by men. The lesson of to-day is this. If we may gain this kinship between God and us, then our souls cannot die till God is dead. Thus did our Lord bring immortality to light.

He showed us truth and love and duty, that they cannot die, and that as we gain them we too shall live. It is only as these live in us that we live in this present life. Sin is death now as it is hereafter. Immortal life is but another name for goodness.

If this be true, it is not something future only, but something present now. It means that present deeds have an eternal meaning, and that all relations sacred here are

heavenly and immortal, and we should so deem them. Jesus, who revealed it, never spoke of life in any other way, and no other is true life.

“ 'T is the divinity that stirs within us :

'T is heaven itself that points out an hereafter.”

If we are raised together with Christ, it is when we seek the things that are above. Our true faith in the heaven that is to be, comes only as that heaven sheds its glow upon the life that is. We best confess it when we seek the things that are above, and only as we walk with Jesus here shall we be with him in the realm beyond, and thus do we become partakers of his resurrection.

This is a very deep and glorious thought—the endlessness of all we do. How it should guide our every choice and how determine every thought and act ! How it should consecrate our loves, exalt our lives and purify our hearts, transform our selfishness to loving service, and make the work of Christ for us, a work in us, and thus his resurrection ours ! Our immortality is now, a growing of the spirit life within, the

deepening of our love, the softening of our hearts with sympathy and tenderness, the sanctifying of our lives. Thus shall we put on immortality, thus shall our corruptible put on its incorruption, and thus, as Jesus by his life brought immortality to light, we must do by following in his way.

“This is the life to come, to be to other souls
The cup of strength in some great agony,
Be the sweet presence of a good diffused;
Thus do we join the choir invisible
Whose music is the gladness of the world.”

Such hopes and aspirations are the foregleams of eternity. There is but one life, and we live it now. It is only as we rise with Christ to-day and now that we shall rise and live with him beyond.

If it be that our faith is dim and clouded, we shall regain it when we live as if we were immortal souls.

I will not try to tell you what it is beyond. It is the wiping of our tears; it is no more death, nor sorrow, neither crying, when these former things are passed away, and night shall be no more. And we may

know that it is good, the realizing of our best ideals, the actual of what we hope. For thus, by these, the varying, uncertain shadows of the things that are, are pierced by the eternal sunlight of the things that are to be, and if our holiest hopes, our highest aspirations and our soul's ideals are deepened as we walk with Jesus in the daytime of our life, at eventide there shall be light.

The Universal Incarnation

And they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.—*Matt. 1: 23.*

Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.—*1 John 4: 15.*

Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.—*Matt. 25: 40.*

The Universal Incarnation

THE shepherd song which sounded in the Syrian sky two thousand years ago to-day, announced to human ears the final and supreme event and consummation in the history of humanity's fulfilment. It heralded the last achievement of a growing revelation, the realizing of the deeper and diviner meaning of our human life so long foretold by holy prophet and foreseen by ancient seer. The hesitating gleams of light which they beheld became the radiance of an eternal glow of which their own was but the distant, glimmering dawn; and the preparing law of Moses and the prophets came to their divine completion in the grace and truth of Jesus Christ. In him God was with men, is with them still, and ever will be with them, in the fulness of humanity uplifted to its prophetic and divine intention.

The inner history of these two thousand years succeeding is but the interpretation of the light which first revealed itself in multitude of heavenly host that quiet night beneath the open sky.

The transformation of the hearts and lives of men and the supreme endeavors of the race have come by following the star beheld by those who by it sought the larger light to which it led. It was the ultimate of human truth and goodness and being thus it points and leads men to the final goal of life.

The supreme and sovereign personage of history is Jesus Christ. To grasp the magnitude of Jesus' person is the divinest task of human thought. For the intelligence of men he is the source of an exhaustless contemplation. The loftiest of human minds are reverent in his immeasurable presence, and with the wise men of the East can offer but their homage, and at his feet cast their slight morsels of frankincense and myrrh and offer at his shrine the incense of their genius. This supreme Mind, whose words of holy

wisdom have transformed our thought and life, knows no intellectual companions. Between him and the intellects of loftiest reach there is a great gulf fixed. His greatness, unencompassed by the mind of man, calls for the heart. For the interpretation of his ineffable, transcendent person, only the clearness of a pure heart suffices. The attitude of men to Jesus is the final and determining computer of their length and height and breadth of vision and of life.

He is the way, the truth, the life of men. They walk in holy paths, become their own true selves, and only truly live, in the larger, deeper meaning of their life, as they interpret him in thought, are moved to worship in his incomparable presence, and follow him in life. His way of truth becomes the path of life.

The fact of his eternal presence, his healing of the sick of heart, his raising of men's dead and dying spirits, the translation into life of the utterance of his lips, have been the only glories of the race since his appearing. The story of the fleeing

shadows in the heart of man and the world's larger life have been but the fulfilment of his own announcement that he was come to be the light of men and of the world. Every advancement of the human mind in the interpretation and the deepening in conception of man's moral life is but the fulfilment of this vision of himself to his own soul, every growing love of man for man its realization.

As Son of man and Son of God, the interpreter and the revealer of the Father's nature and man's childhood, the spreading of his life among the sons of men has ever gendered love and brotherhood. The sacrifice and service of our life, which are its finest beauties, are but the adumbrations of his light and testify to the pre-eminence of Calvary.

He performed the loftiest mental achievement of the race. His ideal of a kingdom of heaven upon the earth, his conception of the Fatherhood of God, his apprehension of a universal brotherhood of men, his interpretation of eternal human life, reached a moral and spiritual height which

absolutely knows no end. All our upliftings of the moral ideal, of our discoveries of goodness, are but the mind of Christ translated to the minds of men.

To recover his unutterable vision is the loftiest aim of human mind and heart. To see his God, to grasp his interpretation of our own souls is the supreme achievement set before the race. His consciousness, so far as gained, is its superlative possession. To know Jesus Christ would be to reach the height and depth of spiritual knowledge. His association with the Infinite was an ideal, unique, transcendent, ineffable and unsearchable relation.

God is the first and last, the beginning and the end, of all his works. In him humanity, the best of his creations, finds its meaning and its end. The Infinite has ever been with men, but in completeness, only once, in Jesus Christ. And ever since the angel annunciated to the mother, The Lord is with thee, the Holy Spirit shall upon thee come, the power of the highest overshadow thee, Jesus has meant this to man. The incarnation was this pledge of the divine

above, and with our human life, the revelation of the heaven that lies about us in our infancy and constantly follows all our days. The shining of the glory of the Lord about the shepherds on the plain of Bethlehem was but the harbinger and witness of the eternal presence of the Infinite with men.

God with us !—a human form which was the perfect garment of the eternal Spirit. The meaning of it all is this : that Jesus had the mind and heart of God and brings before the race as its supreme attainment the gaining of that mind and heart.

The person, then, of Jesus calls for the homage of the race. He is an eternal contrast to the human life to which he came and comes. The difference between his sinlessness and human sin is an eternal moral contrast. Against the somber background of our darkened human lives, the perfection of his spirit is as the sun at night. His exhaustless person calls for a super-eminent, unique distinction. His eternal contrast between sinlessness and sin is the eternal contrast between God and man, and when men bow the knee to Jesus Christ

they worship and adore the God whom he ineffably reveals.

Let the distinction be effaced and he becomes a little less blind leader of the blind. Unless the Father and the Son be one, the Father is not surely leading men in him. Less than divine himself, he never can lead men to a divine intention, nor furnish a divine ideal, except in partial measure. His "I say unto you" is not determining. His "Come unto me" is in a hesitating voice. He speaks not with authority, but as the scribes, and there is no unbroken light upon the world of moral being.

No categories purely human hold him. Heredity, environment and training do not explain his sovereign life amid, and sovereign sway among, the lives of men. The being whose completed human life witnessed to no rectifying process, whose holiness did not begin with penitence, nor ever felt its consciousness, who never knew regret for wrong, and who united in himself all goodnesses, is lifted so above the men beside him that his head is in the clouds of heaven.

His works but verify the estimate and call

for nothing less. Without the aid of human powers he recreates a race. He utters truth which cannot be gainsaid and which knows no beyond. The standing moral miracle of history is Jesus Christ.

And the reverent man who seeks, as men will seek, and ought to seek, an adequate interpretation of Jesus to the intellect—be at the same time his heart and motive pure,—will find himself lifted beyond the humanity in which he stands, will find himself upon the height of Tabor, gazing at a countenance transfigured before him, at a face which shines as the sun, at garments white as the light; while the cloud of a divine glory overshadows him, and in his ears resounds the voice, "This is my beloved Son: hear ye him." The God of Jesus is the highest reach of human thought. The Jesus of God knows nothing higher, and he that hath seen him hath seen the Father.

The solitary perfect moral human light of these two thousand years is clouded with ambiguous shadows, the nature of the Infinite unknown, the faith of men and all their moral life uncertain, the goal of their

achievement is unsure, and the whole present scheme of human progress fails, unless, with an authority that is divine, with an ideal that is the form of God, Jesus Christ is God with us.

But the vision and the revelation have not here their final end for human life. The Son of God is likewise Son of man. He has revealed not only God to men, but God in man, and whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God shall find in Jesus' light that God is dwelling in himself and he in God. The unity of Christ with men must be as clear as the distinction. There is in Jesus a deeper element, a deeper meaning for the race, than the apprehension of the Lord's divine identity. He must become revealer of the God within our human life and selves; his mission to restore the broken image and the heavenly superscription on the race. His ideal for his brethren was the same that he realized in his own life. Be ye perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect.

Humanity can never gain its end by gaz-

ing at a portrait of the Master. It must apprehend his mind and gain his spirit and his life. The relation of the eternal Son with the eternal Father is the ultimate ideal relation between men and God—the actual in Jesus, the prophetic in man. Without the immanence of Christ, his heavenly transcendence can have no vital meaning for the sons of men. And as his actual contrast between himself and men is the eternal ground of faith, so must his essential kinship with the race be its eternal ground of hope.

The actual contrast between the Son of God and the sons of men is identical with the moral difference between the Infinite and finite; then must as well the identity of the sons of men with the human Jesus be the ground of their consciousness as the children of God.

It has a meaning both for the interpretation of the Master and the interpretation of humanity. For if it should be that the Son is not the nature of the Father, we are left without the pledge of our relation with the Father as his children.

And if we bring these truths together,

we shall have a Christ who is the very substance of the Father, with his being grounded in the Godhead, solitary and supreme. And we shall have a human Christ, the supreme human soul, who lives among and moves upon the heart and life of men, lifting the race to his own vision of its divine ideal and to a consciousness of its own inseparable life in God.

This brings us to the very heart of our discipleship with Christ. It is adoration, but it is infinitely more. It is imitation, but it is vastly greater. It gives a Christ infinitely beyond and yet not inaccessible, whose garments are as white as light, but with a hem that we may touch, and live. Discipleship is realization of the divineness in our human clay. It is a love becoming like the object of itself. The incarnation was in man then, that it might be in men. In Jesus God became partaker in the life of men that men might be partakers in the very life of God.

If it is hard for us to see it in our own sinful selves, it will be easier if we look upon the mediators between ourselves and

Christ ; I mean on good and holy men and women whom we know and have known. Theophanies in partial, varying measure we have not far to seek. The darkness of our human life has ever been dispelled by heaven's glow within, and shining from, the human lives of goodness and of love that have touched close our own. The peace of God has come from some calm human hand, a tenderness and love which are divine are often spoken by such human lips and faces.

If we should trace the better life of these two thousand years since Christ, we find it did not come except by human mediation. It all has come from Christ, but came through men and women who more closely followed him. We have known and felt the love of God by seeing love in human life, the truth by visions of it in true men and women, and when such lives have passed beyond the portals of this present world, by them we have been lured and quickened to a deeper faith in the eternal goodness. As Christ was the interpreter of God, so these are the interpreters of Christ.

Take these and carry them from time into eternity of nature, relieve them of all human moral weakness, discharge all their infirmity, evolve the finite to the moral infinite, translate from partial to the perfect, and you have the incarnation, the divine and human Christ. No less than this, then, is the Christ's ideal for men, and the eternally enduring evolution of the race is first to apprehend, and then to gain, in partial but in growing measure, the mind and heart and life of the eternal Son.

It is the living over of his life. It is the baptism with him in Jordan, the passing through with him the crisis of self-revelation, the awaking of the holy consciousness within and hearing the divine voice without. And upon Christ and upon the humanity for which he stands, falls the voice; on it descends the Spirit like a dove abiding. The colossal differentiation must be marked. The voice in us is but a whisper, is not constant, but—it is a voice.

As Jesus walked the way of men, so men must walk the way of Jesus. The wilderness of the temptation will await them.

With him, by him, they rise in conflict. Again the difference is vast. His instant and complete, unbroken conquest, is their age on age-long warfare. And yet, his victory is the pledge of possibility for them. The scene upon the mount of Tabor must be infinitely more than vision. The transfiguration of the Christ was both vision and an impartation. To stand within its light transfigures those on whom it sheds eternal and transforming glow. It is but the beginning, but it is the prophecy of an eternal possibility.

The cross comes next. With Jesus, those who would be his disciples are called by him to gain by losing and to live by dying.

To live, to live for one brief day, a life which ends in an eternal *silence*? The finest and profoundest meaning of the incarnation for the race is here. Only a Christ whose being is of God can meet the calling of the human heart for those that we have loved long since and lost a while. Only a Jesus whose life was that of men can change the longing into hope and faith. For there is no eternal but the Infinite.

Something divine within our human life must be, if it shall know immortal life.

The human life of Jesus was the life of God in man, and the eternal life of men can be none other. Thus hath he brought our human immortality to light.

The universal human incarnation, how clearly and how unreservedly he taught it and declared it! I am the light of the world, and so are ye, like cities set upon a hill and are not hid. The Father hath sent me, and I send you.

This, then, becomes the deeper meaning of the advent: the witness of divinity within our humble human lives, touched by the divine without in Christ, to bring it to fulfilment. It is the pledge and the interpretation of God's eternal life within his children. The transcendence of the Master, by his immanence becomes the pledge of the transcendence of our present selves.

There is one other and far-reaching lesson. The incarnation is a universal process. No human child has been left fatherless. The identity is one that knows no limit or exception. "Inasmuch as ye have done it

unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." My brethren! From the lips of one of whom reproach was made that he receiveth sinners, eating with them. Inasmuch! A universal incarnation.

Its meaning is profound and of deep moment. It translates the service of God and the homage of Christ into the love of the race. It means that other men become eternal mediators, like Christ, between ourselves and God.

The vision we have tried to see will uplift if seen. No loftier view of Christ can human mind conceive. No larger meaning in him for the race could be invented. To apprehend the moral magnitude and contemplate the spiritual force of Jesus is the solitarily supreme desire of the mind of man, and to appropriate his life the loftiest endeavor of a human soul. In him the Infinite is reachable to human contemplation. He is God with us. Through him attainable to human aspiration, he is God within us. The Son of God, the witness and the earnest of the heavenly childhood of the

race, he is the sovereign possession of mankind.

And this is the eternal meaning of magnificat, annunciation, holy advent, shepherd song in Syrian sky and the eternal light which streams from Bethlehem upon the moral longings of the sons of men.

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